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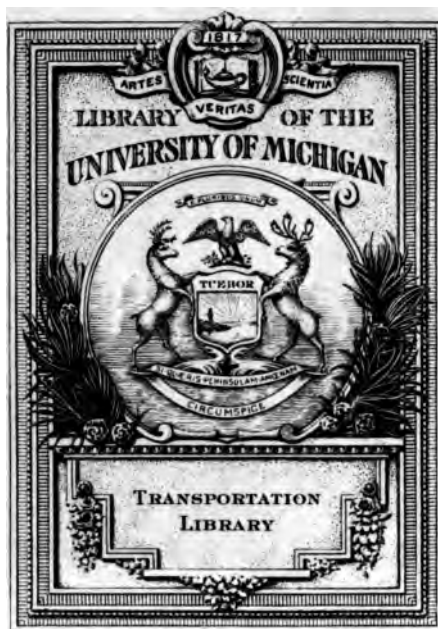
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His Personal Record

William John Pickerton











Wm J. Pinkerton



Grand Jury
May 20-29
Transf.


His Personal Record.

Stories of Railroad Life.

Showing the Injustice of the Personal Record or Black
List, the Age Limit, and the Abuses of the Hospital
and Pension Systems. Illumined and Enlivened
by Stories and Sketches reflecting the Lives
of Railroad Men. * * * *

By WILLIAM JOHN PINKERTON.

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CONTENTS.

	Page.
For Your Consideration	5
The Lottery of Fate.....	19
Missus Cassidy; Herself	26
Into the West.....	51
The Age Limit.....	60
Sam Jonas, Engineer.....	65
I Resume My Story	84
The Hospital Assessment: A Personal Talk	104
The Fruit of Charity	111
A Society Event at Fossil	120
I Turn Sportsman.....	129
Merely an Editorial	144
Dan Sullivan, Alias Ryan	150
I Am Sent to Jail.....	169
A Trip with a Student	191
A Tribute to the Section Boss	210
Mike Morrissey; Straw.....	221
The Pension System	246
Switching at Oakland	258
Allow Me to Protest.....	272
Working in the Flood.....	293



CHAPTER I.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.

Experience, it is popularly supposed, increases a man's value to society, no matter how humble or how exalted his station. Years spent in perfecting himself in his chosen profession, craft, or trade are accounted so much capital by the lawyer, physician, sculptor, painter, stone-mason, or carver of wood. Experience is the world-wide test of reliability, the gauge of safety. The framers of the Constitution of the United States held that a man had not reached the age of stability until thirty-five years had tried him in their fires and currents of adversity. When they agreed upon that clause of our governing code which closes the office of President of this Republic against men under thirty-five, they set what has long been supposed to be the bourne at which the

HIS PERSONAL RECORD.

period of a man's usefulness actually begins: the standard of age for a nation.

But capitalism has set a different standard of age. The great railroad companies have declared that a man has progressed beyond the period of usefulness at from twenty-five to thirty-five years.

Thirty-eight is the average standard age limit of most of the great railway corporations of the United States. One who has lost his position through resignation or discharge, in many of the departments of service on all the big systems, is barred from further employment at the vocation at which he has spent the morning of his life, if his age is above the limit. The limit for the various occupations, in "station order," to use a railroad term, is: fireman, 25; brakeman, 28; switchman, 35; engineer, 37; shopman, 45.

"Public safety demands caution, and caution is synonymous with youth, clear eyes and clear brains," say the railway capitalists, folding their hands complacently across their

HIS PERSONAL RECORD.

7

paunches. And the public feels a little ripple of gratitude, an electric thrill of safety flash up its back, and snuggles confidently against the cushions and lapses into a doze.

But wait a minute.

It is the province of this book to tell wherein the age limit is unjust; wherein it works hardship and suffering; drives men to criminal practices, destitution and suicide, and sacrifices the public because inexperience is cheaper in the labor mart than experience—cheaper for the capitalist who buys.

It shall be the endeavor of the writer to make plain the abuses practiced by the great railway corporations of the United States against their employees, to give reasons for the same, without malice, without bias; to read his indictment before the tribunal of public opinion—the court from which there is no appeal.

It is not generally known that the age limit of railroad corporations is thirty-eight years. Some companies, in their eager thirst for new blood and their jealous care of the public safety, have materially reduced this standard.

It is not generally known that all the great railway companies of the United States maintain systems of espionage and bureaus of information, interchangeable and unlimited in scope, through which every act of the employee's life is traced, tabulated, and in time arrayed against him; that an applicant for a position in the traffic service of a railroad must fill out a "personal record" blank, covering his entire life, and must file, in many cases, a tintype photograph of himself—a tintype because it cannot be retouched, and because it will show, therefore, all facial marks and blemishes that surgery might, at some future time, remove.

The public does not know that a candidate for employment on a railroad is subjected to a more rigid physical examination than a recruit to the United States Army, or any army, for that matter. The public is not aware that some stripling from the bench of a machine medical college is the final arbiter in such case, and that experience and qualifications must yield to his distorted ideas of physical perfection. Give the medical examiner a good animal, sound of

wind and limb, fresh from the handles of the plow, and he will not thump the occiput for a hollow sound. But the veteran railroad man, with the tip of a finger missing since he made a coupling in the dark one winter night, is thrown on the rubbish-heap undone by his experience.

It must not be surmised, at the beginning, that the writer objects to or that the brotherhoods of railway employees are antagonistic to a reasonable physical examination—examination for color-blindness and hearing, which is a safeguard to public welfare. But a protest is entered, emphatic, strenuous, against the universal practice of these greedy powers of making the physical examination and age limit serve as excuse for disposing of the veteran before he shall become a subject for participation in the various so-called "relief funds," unjustly retained and employed under the guise of charity.

Millions of dollars are collected annually in hospital and pension fund assessments by the railroad companies of the United States. Not

one-tenth of the money thus collected is ever expended, and yet it is not charged that the railroads do not fulfill their obligations. But, by ridding themselves of old employees and taking in their places men who are less liable to lay claim to assistance, they protect these vast funds and have the millions for use in the prosecution of their business. It is cheaper by far than issuing bonds. Good risks, and good risks only, are wanted by the insurance departments of the railways. They are jealous in the protection of these vast funds, to which they do not contribute one cent themselves; careful that the men who maintain them are removed before age or misfortune shall make them subject to the benefit to which, in human justice, they are entitled. This reason, and this alone, is the explanation of the age limit and physical standards of railroads. This will be made plain as we progress.

That these gross injustices are practiced is due alone to the lack of unity in the various organizations of railway employees. Instead of federating, as their employers have done; for

the purpose of eliminating competition, they have each other by the ears over trivial matters—matters of no moment in comparison with the wrongs practiced against them in the form of age limits, physical examinations, and the perfect system of black-listing.

There is caste among the brotherhoods of railway employees. The touch of one is defiling to another, each imagining itself a degree above its neighbor at the right or the left. Questions of precedence, of etiquette, mind you, divide them and blind them to the evils men work against them.

The railroad companies are cognizant of these dissensions. They nurse them, as a scientist cultivates germs, knowing that a house divided is a weak opponent. The railroad companies realize that concerted action on the part of their employees would put an end to the reign of greed and the rule of merciless despoliation.

A united protest must come sooner or later. When it shall come, the railroads desire to be prepared. They see the shadows of coming

events; they know the various brotherhoods will forget their internal jealousies and strife and take up these flagrant injustices in their conventions of the near future; they know that the indiscriminate dismissal of men without reason or excuse, without explanation or warning, will school those who remain in the feeble tenure of their own positions. The railroad companies have a well-defined purpose in hounding men from place to place, persecuting them from lodgment to lodgment, driving them, on account of some old score—some part in the great A. R. U. strike, perhaps, or some small falsification in a personal record—at last out of the vocation they have grown into and followed until their minds are molded around it and their hands are cunning in its ways; in driving them at last into the degrading station and abject slavery fate has fashioned for the unskilled, unclassed laborer.

Hardship and persecution break the manhood of the bravest. The railroad man who has been black-listed, hunted from place to place, forced to abandon the name of his father, like

a criminal or disgraced outcast, in order to free himself from the shadow of some previous personal record in which the date of his birth stands between him and his chance of further employment at the only trade he knows, loses faith in the potency of unionism. He grows bitter in time, and resentful. He argues:

"My union has done nothing for me in the hour of my extremity; it has not interceded between my unjust employer and me; it has not reached out its hand to stay the lash; it has not comforted me. In the strength of my youth, the confident morning of my life, I was faithful to it, and now, like a wanton mistress, it turns from me when the luster is dying from my hair and the footprints of experience track my brow." It is to this reasoning the railroads desire to bring him. Then, when the strike comes, their agents seek him. He takes out the abandoned engine, or makes up the train in the congested yards. Chance, fortune, circumstances has favored him again. He sees the pathway he has followed the better part of his life again opening to him, even though he must

begin it anew at reduced wage. But, he believes he has been wronged more deeply than he can wrong. It is an individual struggle, as it appears to him, each man for himself. So he turns deaf ears to entreaties, threats, slanders. He becomes a scab.

The larger this floating, discontented, almost desperate element, the better for the railroads in time of need. In pursuing this course the railroad companies are taking advantage of the lack of unity and concentration of force in the unions to turn them against themselves. This is the principal reason for the black-list or personal record system.

The outcast "scab" is used until some student, innocent of a past and of experience, can be persuaded, under protection of the United States militia, to take his place. Then, its purpose accomplished, the corporation relaxes its hold upon the broken tool, and the public pays, in bereavements and anguish, suffering and death and loss of limb resulting from terrible disasters, for the tutelage of the inexperienced man.

It is easily understood why a railroad prefers spending half a million dollars a year in defending, defeating, and adjusting claims for damages, to employing experienced men. As before stated, the railroads desire to flood the country with men skilled in all branches of the service to be used in time of trouble. To aid in accomplishing this end they have not alone the iniquitous personal record and physical examination systems, but the bugbear of operating expenses. Department is pitted against department, superintendent against superintendent, when it becomes necessary, from the viewpoint of "high finance," to increase dividends.

The word goes out that operating expenses must be reduced, and department heads get busy. Retrenchment is made sometimes by actual reduction in the daily wages of the employees, sometimes by increasing the amount of piece-work or increase in the handling of tonnage, and again by adding mileage to monthly men and reducing the number employed, besides replacing brakemen on passenger trains by negro porters, who will perform in a way

the brakeman's work as well as all sorts of menial tasks at less than half their pay. These retrenchments open channels by which a big road can reduce its operating expenses a million of dollars or more yearly. What does "high finance" care about human life and big legal department costs, so long as the dividends may be increased?

To the discharge of experienced brakemen on passenger trains and the employment of cheap negro porters in their stead is due the alarming increase in railroad disasters during the past five years. Inexperience and limited intelligence cannot be burdened by detail. The porter-brakeman must clean cuspidors, carry water to passengers, make down berths, and do many other things. The protection of his train is incidental, and he is schooled by his employer to look upon it as such. Since the advent of the student brakeman, the wise and safe regulations that formerly governed the protection of trains by flagging have been changed. Now, in place of the application of common sense, these matters, upon which hundreds of human lives are daily

dependent, are left entirely to the judgment of the student brakeman, or the black man pressed into service from a menial position in saloon, restaurant, or hotel.

What is the judgment of such an employee worth at a critical time? What does he know of grades, momentum, liability of failure in mechanical appliances, of the countless contingencies that arise in a moment, and that only practical experience can school a man to meet?

The training of a railroad man is a matter of years. One who has entered the service at twenty has become thoroughly seasoned at thirty-five. For the next ten years of his life he is worth more to his employer than he was during the fifteen years of his apprenticeship. He has served in many capacities, in many parts of the country. He is familiar with the peculiarities of different sections, of traffic on mountain grade and level plain. He very likely will bear scars, but they will be trade-marks of his genuineness, and it is unjust to turn them against him.

My own life is a fair sample of that of the

experienced railroad man. It is marked by failures, defeats, successes, and adventures of many kinds. I have written my personal record at length, herein. I have carried with it a story now and then to serve as illumination when the run of it begins to weary, and I have made my argument against the injustices we are made to suffer. I am a switchman, and as such am now across the dead-line. I am an old man, in the eyes of the medical examiner and my employers, and must soon give way to new timber. And I know when I am turned adrift that my railroad career will be ended, because I am burdened with the weight of years. My personal record stands against me. It shows that I am thirty-seven.

CHAPTER II.**THE LOTTERY OF FATE.**

I was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1867. My father was head constable in the Royal Irish Constabulary, and held some high notions and commendable ambitions for the future of his children, five boys and two girls. The foundation for a good education was early laid in each of us, it being the intention of my father to have us enter Trinity College in due time. But the lottery of fate held a different plan for me, and I entered, instead of Trinity, the larger school of the world.

I displayed a rebellious disposition when very young, and ran away from home in quest of adventure several times. My father, despairing at last of making a scholar of me, decided to give me the choice of a trade or profession. After due deliberation, my railroad

career was begun by my accepting a position as clerk in the parcel department of the London & Northwestern, at Dublin North Wall.

It was not long until I became dissatisfied with the strict rules and close confinement of the position, and one morning, without having gone through the formality of notifying my employers or my parents of my intention, I left for Liverpool on the steamer *Banshee*. Without loss of time I shipped from Liverpool to Baltimore, my ultimate destination being New York, where an uncle was engaged in the lumber and planing-mill business.

Without mishap or adventure I arrived in New York and was given employment by my uncle, I being at that time a lusty chap and strong. But handling lumber did not conform to my ideas of life, and through the influence of my relative I was given a position in a large carpet house. I had not been long employed there when I took exception to some orders given me by an elderly person. An altercation followed, in which my hot blood carried me away. The elderly person proved

to be the head of the firm. I was dismissed.

This crushed me somewhat, and I felt that up to this time my venture in the New World had been a failure. Resolved, however, that I must stand alone, and ask no further assistance from anyone, I bought a ticket for Buffalo, determined to work my way toward the west. In Buffalo I succeeded in obtaining a position in a sanitarium, attending upon an old gentleman. After I had administered to him about two weeks, he died. While I did not believe that his end had been hastened by me, the melancholy circumstance served as a further argument to convince me that the problem of success, even of existence in the United States, was not to be mastered without trials and disappointments.

Soon a position as night-watchman in a hotel offered. For six months I held it, then was dismissed to make room for the man who had previously filled the post. Without anchorage again, I faced the west. Hillsdale, Michigan, was my next stop, and there, as in Buffalo, I was night-watchman in a hotel.

But I had been given the place because there was no other applicant, evidently, as the proprietor quickly made my youthful appearance an excuse for discharging me.

On again, this time to Chicago. I remained in Chicago but a few hours, however, securing cheap transportation from that city to a small station in Nebraska, where I intended to work as laborer on the Union Pacific Railway. In Omaha I fell in with a wanderer from Seattle, Washington, who persuaded me to abandon my intention of laboring on the railroad grade and accompany him to the northwest. I set out with him, and there and then was introduced to the art of traveling without paying fare. This gentleman certainly introduced me to his methods without formality. Sometimes we rode in dirty box-cars; other times, especially at night, on top; and again in the more dangerous position beneath the cars, clinging to brake-beams with legs stretched along connecting-rods to keep our feet from striking the ground.

It required but a few days of this transpor-

tation to convince me that I was not designed by nature for a knight of the brake-beam. I deserted my companion and returned to Omaha and from that point shipped to Fort Smith, Arkansas, to work on the Choctaw extension of the St. Louis & San Francisco road. I had the promise of a position as time-keeper with McLaughlin Brothers, who had a large contract for grading near Tuskahoma, Indian Territory.

On arriving at the work, however, I formed a partnership with another man for the purpose of taking sub-contracts on culvert work. We did well, making as much as \$150 on a single job. My partner, unused to such prosperity—his name was Murphy—being a typical old-time grader, insisted that we suspend work for a while and go to Fort Smith for a "time." We went, spent our money, and in a few days were tramping back to the camp with the intention of going to work and saving money to pay our fare to St. Louis, with the ultimate design of going to Canada. Murphy had heard of great wealth to be made

there by taking sub-contracts on the Canadian Pacific. We tramped for two days, and arrived at the camp to find our abandoned work in the hands of other and wiser men. We went to work as laborers.

This was my first experience with that vast shifting army which builded the great railway lines of the United States. They were a picturesque people, living in a world entirely their own. They had their romances, humble though they were, their qualities and weaknesses, and above all, their human traits. The army to which they belonged has disbanded, the last tie having been laid, the last spike driven, and the last bolt fastened in our great railway systems. In the places where they toiled but half a generation ago, one sees to-day gangs of dwarfed Italians, taciturn Greeks, and "Bohunks" from the crowded and oppressed European countries. The old freedom, independence, and picturesqueness of this phase of railroad life is gone.

The following story may suffice to give those who have not known them an acquaint-

ance with, a passing glance into, their lives.

Let us call it a chapter and begin.

CHAPTER III.

MISSUS CASSIDY: HERSELF.

"Um te iddle de, hi de aye,
Toimes is moighty ha-a-rd,
It's a dollar a day is dom poor pay
For wor-r-uk in th' Sawnta Fa yar-r-d."

Owen Dugan sang the words as if he fully appreciated the condition they depicted, slowly, out of tune, and with a sorrowful nasal intonation as he appeared in the side door of the boarding-car with the sleeves of his blue flannel shirt tucked up above his elbows and a bundle under his arm. He craned his neck out past the side of the car, looked up the track, then down, swung around to the ladder nailed beside the door and climbed to the ground.

"Um te iddle de, hi de aye,
Toimes is moighty ha-a-rd,"

sang Owen as he walked down the long line of freight cars, converted into movable boarding-houses by the addition of bunks, one above the other like shelves in a store, and small windows near the roofs.

At the farther end of the train two large cars once devoted to the transportation of furniture, with connecting doors cut in the ends, served as kitchen and dining-room. Under a cottonwood-tree beside the kitchen car a long bench stood, with tin wash-basins all upturned upon it. It was the etiquette of the boarding-train for each man to dash the water in which he had washed against the side of the kitchen and reverse the basin. The water was thrown against the car out of consideration for Missus Cassidy, who was within, sweating over pots of cabbage and beef and kettles of potatoes. It was the current opinion that the water reduced the temperature of the car, and that Missus Cassidy appreciated it.

The men who made the boarding-train their home had finished their supper, and the sun

was flashing a defiant, yellow face in a sky as dry and hot as the top of Missus Cassidy's stove. The shadows of the cars, magnified by the slant sunlight into a bulk of palaces, fell cool across the little strip of ballast lying along the ties; over the ditch a rod beyond the track and far out into the right-of-way. On the bank, where the wind came intermittently like the gasps of a dying man, the men rested with shirt-fronts open and hats on the grass beside them. Some played old sledge, some smoked with backs propped against piles of ties, some read weather-stained and irregular fragments of newspapers gleaned along the track in the course of the day's work, and others stretched at length and dozed, starting suddenly at times to slap at pestering insects.

Owen Dugan approached the wash-bench. On one end of it a little man with a big head, bearing a prodigal growth of gray-streaked hair, sat with arms folded across his breast, apparently asleep. Owen stopped before him and studied him critically for a moment, then passed on and sat down on the other end of

the bench, with his bundle at his side. For a few minutes he sat there, humming his statement of conditions in the Santa Fé yard, looking obliquely over his nose at the "jerry" dozing among the pans. Owen's left hand was busy with something, fumbling stealthily about under the basins near him. Still humming his tune, he withdrew the hand, tucked something into his bundle, folded it again under his arm, and started away.

The little man leaned forward and laughed, a short, grinding laugh, like the growl of the cog-wheels in the hand-car.

"Um te iddle de, hi de aye," he repeated after Owen, derisively. Then he unfolded his stocky arms and laughed again.

"Oh, Ow'n," said he, "yees may go singin' your 'Um te iddle de,' yees may sthrut about an' make a foine show, but I saw yees sthale Missus Cassidy's soap aff th' wash-binch t' wash your owld shirt wit, so I did. Sure Ow'n, me bye, I would t'ink a mon av your build would bay a long toime wit'out a change t' th' back av 'im before he'd sthale from a

poor widdy that's foorced t' boord a gang o' tarriers th' loikes av yees t' make 'er way. Oh, it's yees wit' yer foine gab that thrys t' de-save th' poor woman into marryin' up wit' yees, but I see herself a battin' yees over th' head wit' a pick-handle when I tell 'er—"

"Aw, Burns, dhry up, ye owld bag o' taties," said Owen. "Dhry up before I bate th' face av yees."

"Well thin, come on," cried Burns, bouncing up and overturning the wash-bench with a great clattering of tins. "Come on, me laddie-buck! come on, me foine young thafe! come on, Ow'n, ye highway robber! I can take care o' mesilf, I can."

Burns circled about Owen, whirling his arms like a reel, scuffing his feet through a pile of ashes Missus Cassidy had thrown from her stove and raising a cloud of dust. Owen stood with his package clutched tightly under his arm, looking scornfully at the antics of his little antagonist.

"Ah-h, come on now, will yees," said Burns, striking out for Owen's stomach and falling

short by three feet; "come on now, an' meet a mon."

"Oh, git out, ye little rooster," Owen answered, advancing by a quick sally and kicking viciously at his tormentor. Burns hopped nimbly aside and the heavy shoe plunged past him like the hammer of a pile-driver. The men on the embankment began to take sides in the combat. Heads popped up out of the grass and words of encouragement and advice were shouted by the friends of the contestants. Several independent rows, carried on at long range, got well under way as the two men capered and dodged.

The noise penetrated the kitchen car above the clash of dishes and pots. Herself heard it and went to the door, where she stood looking contemptuously at Burns and Owen, carefully avoiding each other in the ditch below.

Herself almost filled the door in all directions. She was broad and tall, with a round, colorless face, soft and spongy, like a pan of dough. Her freckled arms were bare above the elbows, and her short, uneven black hair

was wound in a tight lump at the back of her head. To the jerries of the boarding-train she was mother, guardian, banker, physician, nurse, and spiritual adviser. Silence clapped its palm over their mouths when they saw her standing in the door with her hands resting on her fat sides.

Burns and Owen were so deeply interested in each other that they were not aware of the addition to their spectators. Herself watched them in silence for a short time, then called out in her voice of command, a voice that had sent shivers chasing each other up the back of the departed Cassidy in other days:

"Burns! Ow'n! Lave off that foolishness before I come down an' bat th' two heads av yees together. Ye're a foine pair o' jukes now, ain't yees? Oh, look at th' brave lads, prancin' aroun' loike two owld hins. A-a-and th' rest av yees," she shouted, shaking her fist at the men on the bank, who dodged and cowered as if expecting a blow; "yees have shmall sinse t' bay aggin' on two owld fools th' loikes av thim. G'wan wit' yees, now."

Harry Burns hung his shaggy head in respectful submission, dropped his thick, sun-colored arms at his side, and went back to the wash-bench, which he righted with a grave face, rolling his eyes in distrustful vigilance at Owen. Owen laughed.

"Ye owld divil," said Owen; "sure it would bay shmall worruk for me t' howld yees out bay th' back av th' nick an' lave yees sthuggle yersilf t' deat'. As he spoke he turned grandly, with his bully's swagger, and walked away, conscious of the admiring gaze of Missus Cassidy resting on his back. Herself, her fat cheek leaning against the door-casing, watched Owen until he disappeared behind the farther end of the train. Then she turned in ponderous severity to Burns, who had resumed his seat beside the cottonwood-tree.

"Yees may look after him, Missus Cassidy," said Burns, nodding his head slowly, gravely, at her. "Yees may look after him an' t'ink how foi-n-n-e an' gr-r-r-and he is, but if you marry up wit' him, he'll dhrink your

bar dhry an' ate th' last tatie out av th' bag in your kitchen."

Missus Cassidy laughed, flourished her apron playfully at Burns, and turned to her work again. Soon above kitchen noises Burns heard her singing, with many long-drawn rests not written by the composer, but due to Missus Cassidy stooping to lift some cooking utensil from the floor;

"Me name is Jack Har—din,
I come from Sphring Gar——den,
T' make me a pracher me——father did
th—ry."

"Sure," said he, "Herself have th' vice av a noightingale."

In the forward end of the dining-car was the bar, a loosely joined contrivance of planed pine boards on top and unplaned pine boards in front. There would have been no front had it not been for the necessity of concealing the jug. Missus Cassidy operated the bar under a Government license and defied the statutes of the State. One State was hardly large enough, in Missus Cassidy's opinion, to de-

serve consideration. But certain precautionary measures were taken, and to any person unacquainted with its secret, the bar was only a rough counter cutting off six feet of the car, behind which was stowed on shelves some bufts of chewing tobacco, twists and packages of the same for the jerries' pipes, and piles of overalls, shirts, and jackets.

But to the jerries it was a bar—the bar. Humble in appearance, but the most important institution, in fact, on the train. Whisky was its only drink, and that was kept in a wicker-covered jug, called by Herself a jimmy-john. When a jerry wanted a drink he produced ten cents or negotiated credit to that extent, and the portion due him was “spilled” out by Herself into a tin cup. Long practice had made Missus Cassidy’s hand reliable in checking the flow from the jimmy-john before the tide in the tin cup rose above the margin of profit.

On the Sunday afternoon following the day upon which Owen and Burns had their bloodless encounter, Owen passed down the

line of cars smoking a cigar. He advanced boldly upon the dining-car as one bound on an important undertaking and confident in his own strength. When he climbed in, he found Herself leaning her elbows on the bar and talking across with Harry Burns. Owen lifted his hat, which was a new one and of the variety designated by the jerries as a "dinky," and bowed. Then he stood in the door, swelling his chest out and waiting for an invitation to step up.

For half an hour before he set out for Missus Cassidy's boudoir he sat on the edge of his bunk, training his big red mustache back in military style before a small mirror held fast in the heel of his fist. Missus Cassidy looked at him and smiled.

"Come in, Ow'n," she said.

Owen strutted up to the bar and stood beside Burns, who was attired in his working clothes, the sleeves of his shirt tucked back for comfort, showing the big veins in his arms.

"An' how air ye t'-day, Missus Cassidy," said Owen, smiling and cordial, and acting just as

if he had not seen Herself at the dinner table two hours before. "Burns," said he, turning to him, "will yees dhrink wit' me?"

"I will dhrink with ony mon," said Burns, throwing his shoulders back and wagging his head. "I owe no mon a grudge."

Owen took the cup Missus Cassidy pushed toward him, and handed the other to Burns. The two men faced each other, cups uplifted. Owen stood high above Burns, whose gray head and stocky shoulders came just neatly above the bar. Owen faced Missus Cassidy, waved his hand deprecatingly toward Burns, cleared his throat and said, bringing his big voice up gruff and grand from his chest:

"Marry a mon whin yees marry, Missus Cassidy, marry a mon."

So saying, he threw his head back and poured the liquor down the funnel of his neck, while Missus Cassidy shrieked with laughter, swaying from side to side like an elephant in her merriment. During a lull, in which she caught her breath and took a fresh turn at the mainspring of her mirth, she reached

across the bar, poked Owen in the ribs, and said:

"Oh, *git* out wit' yees, Ow'n."

Burns, humiliated and angry, placed his untasted whisky on the bar and went away. As his head disappeared from Missus Cassidy's range of vision, bobbing along the side of the train, she dried the tears from her eyes with the corner of her apron, and said:

"Poor owld Harry. He have a har-rt in 'inu th' soize av th' jimmy-john. I b'lave yees have hoorted 'is falins."

That evening Owen asked the foreman of the steel gang to let him off on Monday. "I want t' go t' th' city t' look after me invist-mints," he said. On the boarding train Owen had the name of being a man of means, owing to his fine clothes and stingy habits. He encouraged the belief by cunning hints of heavy taxes in the city, and the burden they were to a poor man who owned a bit of property.

After the men had gone away on the hand-cars to their work Monday morning, Missus Cassidy arrayed herself in her most brilliant

dress. She told Maggie McCann, her assistant, that it was necessary for her to go to the city to settle her monthly account and buy supplies. The midday meal was left entirely to Maggie, and the jimmy-john was locked up in Missus Cassidy's trunk.

Maggie looked after Missus Cassidy as she made her way toward the depot a quarter of a mile up the track, holding her skirts high above the greasy rails and displaying two feet of red-stockinged lower limbs.

"Sure," said Maggie, "they would flag th' cannon-ball."

Maggie saw Owen Dugan emerge from a car and join Missus Cassidy as she passed. He was rigged out in all his finery and wore his coat. Neither of them looked back. Maggie pressed her hands over mouth and backed away from the door, sputtering and exploding between her fingers like an engine backing onto a siding after a car. Maggie always backed up when her mirth became unsettled. It was her habit to snort blindly along in that manner until her progress was blocked by

some immovable piece of furniture. Once she sat down on Missus Cassidy's stove and threatened to sue the company, and once she plumped down upon Sam Cafferty, the road master, who was sipping a noggin of whisky beside Missus Cassidy's bar.

On this Monday morning the dining room table stopped her, and she sat there until her head of steam ran down. Then she went to the door and looked up the track again. Missus Cassidy was holding her skirts with one hand, while the other rested on the arm of Owen Dugan.

"Missus Cassidy," said Maggie, solemnly; "Missus Cassidy, ye will rue th' day."

"An' where is Missus Cassidy?" said Harry Burns, when he came in for dinner.

"Sure she have gone up t' th' city," answered Maggie, bending over the stove and pretending not to see him; "sure, she have gone up t' th' city wit' Owen Dugan."

Maggie heard Burns mutter, and saw him strike at nothing with his fist, aiming at a point somewhat above a line with his nose,

about where the face of Owen Dugan might have been—had not he been in the city with Herself.

Missus Cassidy returned on the evening train. She came down the track from the depot in a great hurry, paying no attention at all to her skirts. Maggie saw her coming.

"Something is wrong wit' Herself," Maggie commented, wiping the sweat from her face on a dish-cloth. Presently Herself came sweeping up to the car door, her skirts dragging over the ballast and raising small clouds of dust. Up the ladder she climbed, sank down like a bunch of wilted lettuce in a chair, raised her arms above her head and dropped them with a reckless disregard of their safety, and moaned. Maggie approached carefully.

"I am ruint," said Herself, "clane ruint an' disgraced. I am robbed an' desaved."

Maggie, undecided as to the ultimate turn of events, stood and looked at her, ready to retreat at the slightest manifestation of violence.

Presently Herself sprang to her feet with

a fierce cry and began tearing at her finery. Piece by piece she plucked it from her, and when all lay in a heap on the floor, Missus Cassidy trampled upon it, kicked it out of the door, and donned her greasy wrapper and gingham apron. It was supper time, and the men would soon come home, but Herself did not think of them. Out of the car she went, like one bent on self-destruction, and ran down the train to a shady spot where an unused hand-car stood beside the track. She sat down upon it and covered her head with her apron. The men found her there, rocking to and fro and moaning.

There was great excitement. Missus Cassidy would not budge from the hand-car; she would not unveil her face, and no explanation was forthcoming from her lips. The voice behind the apron repeated over and over again, in a low, agonized wail: "Oh-h-h! oh-h-h-h!" The men gathered around her, and Maggie hovered in the background, ready to turn and fly in case Missus Cassidy began to bowl them over.

"What's wrong wit' Herself?" the foreman of the steel gang asked Maggie. Maggie said that Herself had said, when she came home from the city, that she was ruint an' robbed.

"Who done it?" demanded the foreman, glaring at Maggie, then sweeping the crowd with his little red eyes. "Who has been afther ruinin' an' robbin' av Herself?"

"Ow'n," said Harry Burns; "Ow'n."

"Ow'n," said Maggie; "he wint t' th' city wit' Herself."

"Ow'n," said the jerries, looking knowingly at each other as if to say: "Ah! what did I tell you that fine fellow would do? Ah-h!"

Harry Burns went to the wash-bench, filled a basin with water, and washed his hands, face, neck, and chest, as he always did after the day's work. When he finished, he threw the water on the ground. A barrier had arisen between himself and Missus Cassidy. That barrier was Owen Dugan. It did not matter any longer whether she was cold or hot. His hands would never dash water against the car

of the deceitful woman again, even if she shrivelled up beside her stove.

The men were sympathetic, but helpless. They didn't know much about the moods of women, and this turn of Missus Cassidy's puzzled them. They finally concluded that she would come to her senses in time if left alone. So they left her alone and went to the supper Maggie got ready for them. It was almost dark when they finished the meal. Missus Cassidy was still on the hand-car when they left the tables and gathered in bunches to discuss the strange event. Owen had not returned.

Burns walked up and down the track on the opposite side of the train. When he walked toward the north, his back was turned upon Missus Cassidy; when he walked toward the south, he could see her, a swaying, troubled figure in the growing gloom.

"I will spake wit' her," he said. He contrived to make a great deal of noise as he approached, but Missus Cassidy took no heed.

"Um-m-m!" said Burns, clearing his throat; "ha-a-a!"

"Oh!" moaned Missus Cassidy, beating her feet against the ground and holding her hands over her ears.

"Missus Cassidy," said Burns, "Missus Cassidy, brace up, will yees?"

She did not reply. Burns tried to lift one corner of the apron and peep cautiously into her face. When she felt his hand she jerked her head away like a petulant child, and moaned more dismally than before. Burns moved stealthily around to the other side and plucked at the apron again. Missus Cassidy threw her head violently in the opposite direction and brought it a hard thump against the upright framework of the hand-car.

"Ah, Missus Cassidy," said Burns, "sure yees will bate out your brains."

He looked up the track. It was too dark for the men to see. Gently he took Missus Cassidy's right hand down, then her left, removed the apron from her face, and sat down beside her.

"Tell me about it," said he.

Missus Cassidy burst into tears. "Oh, th' divil!" said Burns, "what can a mon do?" Presently Missus Cassidy became calm.

"He 's a desaver," she said.

"He is that," said Burns.

"Yees towld me he was," said she.

"Oh, niver moind," he answered.

"Well," she continued, "on th' afternoon av Sinday—oh, it was only yisterday, but it sames a loife—Ow'n asked me t' marry him. I consinted, an' we wint t' th' city t'-day an' wor jint in th' bounds av mathrimony bay Father Cloheesy. It was all rigler; I have th' pay-pers here. When we wor jint we set out t' pay some bills I owed for me last mont's stuff. 'How much do yees owe,' asked Ow'n. 'T'ree hundred dollars,' says I. 'Have yees th' money,' says he. 'I have,' says I. 'Thin,' says he, 'lave me have it an' I'll put it in th' bank where I kapes me own,' he says, 'an'. I'll dhraw out t'ree hundred dollars,' says he, 'from me own money,' he says, 'for to pay th'

bills,' an' he pulled out a bank-book wit' th' name av 'im writ on th' lid av it.

"'It's good av th' dear mon,' says I, an' I gives 'im th' money. 'Wait for me at so-an'-so,' says he, an' away he goes. I waited an' waited an' waited for 'im, but he niver come back, so I goes t' th' bank he spoke av t' see if he's got there yit, thinkin' maybe he'd got roond over wit' a boysoykle 'r a cable car. There they says t' me that Ow'n Dugan had dhrawed out, an hour or two back, all th' money he had in th' bank. Not knowin' what t' do, I goes t' th' polayce.

"'Me good woman,' says th' chafe—a foine-lookin' mon—'me good woman, yees have been bunkoed, yees have been robbed. Ow'n Dugan will niver come back wit' your money. That's an owld game.'

"So, I am ruint. Th' t'ree hundred dollars was all I had in th' worruld t' pay me bills, an' I'll not bay able t' pay now an' I can git no credit till they're paid. I'm disgraced an' ruint." Missus Cassidy again covered her face with her apron and sobbed.

Harry Burns looked slyly around. Carefully he peeped into the shadows at the right, the left, and behind. His fingers were busy with a belt he always wore about his middle. Unbuckling it, he placed it in Missus Cassidy's lap, took her right hand, laid it upon the leather, and said:

"Missus Cassidy, here is me bank. Yees will foind a t'ousand dollars in it—th' blood av me har-rt an' th' sweat av me body for sivin toilin' years. Ye're welcome t' th' whole av it, an' God knows I'm only sorry it ain't tin toimes as much."

He arose to leave her. Missus Cassidy sprang to her feet, dashed the apron from her head, and held out her hands. Burns threw up his arm and ducked his head, as if guarding a blow, and Missus Cassidy, half laughing, half crying, clasped him about the neck and kissed him.

"Oh, Missus Cassidy!" said he; "oh, Missus Cassidy! t' t'ink."

They walked back to the boarding train. Burns assisted her gallantly to climb into her

car. As he started away he turned, went back, put his head in at the door, and said:

"Git a dayvoorce av 'im, Missus Cassidy, git a dayvoorce."

* * * *

The night was heavy with close-pressing clouds, and rain played an incessant melody that lulled the spirit of strife and controversy in the jerries' breasts. The boarding train was dark and silent, marked by a red lantern tied to the ladder of a car at either end, and Missus Cassidy's troubles were blotted out by the heavy hand of sleep. A tapping on the half-open door, somewhat louder than the rain, aroused her. She propped herself up on her elbow and listened. It sounded again, unmistakably the timid, questioning knock of some night wanderer.

'Aw, go long wit' ye, now," ordered Herself, in an authoritative tone, "an' don't bay wakin' honest people up, ye owld bum."

"Me de-ear," answered a voice out of the blackness and wet, a pleading, coaxing voice;

"sure yees won't turn a mon out t' stharve wit' th' hoonger in th' rain."

Herself flounced out of bed with a suddenness that shook the car, ran to the door, threw it open, and peered out. A man was clinging to the ladder beside the door, and he placed a cold, damp hand on the sleeve of Herself's gleaming, white gown.

"Me de-ar," said he, "will yees lave me come in?"

The touch fully awakened Missus Cassidy. She reached out with a sobbing cry of joy and drew the dripping, rain-drenched man into the car. Enveloping him in an ardent embrace, and caressing him as a mother would caress a wayward child, she said:

"Oh, Ow'n, me lad, have yees come back t' me?"

CHAPTER IV.

INTO THE WEST.

When we had saved sufficient money, Murphy and I set out for St. Louis, leaving Ft. Smith over the St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad, paying our fare to the brakeman at the customary rate of one dollar a division. On reaching St. Louis, Murphy went on a spree and spent all the money he had. I assisted him all I could until I finally reached the conclusion that so long as there was a drink to be obtained he would not seek employment. So the partnership was dissolved and Murphy went his way.

I was almost out of funds, and cast about me for employment, resolved to make a few dollars and strike out for the extreme west. I secured a place as deck-hand on a Mississippi River steamer, the *Spread Eagle*. While on

this vessel I was thrown with the toughest element I have ever met. The crew was of all colors and creeds, the lowest of the low. I made a few trips on the *Spread Eagle* and held my own carrying pig-iron and coaling up with wheelbarrows. At night I slept under the boilers in company with negroes, Italians, and the lowest type of Americans—a type I have never met anywhere else, and which I believe to be peculiar to this great river and this class of work. As steamboating was a means to an end with me, I soon severed my connection with the *Spread Eagle*. The captain endeavored to induce me to remain, offering me a better position, or holding up the prospect of one, at least.

Kansas City was the next stage in my westward journey. There I found work on the Wyandotte & Northwestern. After a few months with that road I again pushed toward the west, stopping at Pueblo, Colorado. From that point I shipped to work on the grade of the Denver & Rio Grande. My previous experience in grading soon enabled me to secure

a position as foreman. But I was not satisfied with the migratory nature of the work, it being my ambition to get into some congenial pursuit at which I might settle down and make something of myself.

I stuck to the grade for some time, but at last the spirit of unrest moved me, and, in company with a friend, I decided to visit Leadville, that notorious place being then at the summit of its prosperity. Shouldering our blankets, we set out from Hell's Gate to tramp to Grand Junction, from which point we knew we could take a construction train for our destination.

The tunnel into Grand Junction, Colorado, was not completed, and the only route open to us was a trail along the outside of the tunnel, overhanging the Grand River. One part of the trail was supplied by planks suspended by ropes from the face of the cliff, and another link was a rope ladder, one hundred or more feet long, dangling down the side of a precipice. We finally mastered all obstacles in our path and reached the east end of the tunnel.

There we found a large number of men waiting the arrival of the construction train, all bound for Leadville. When the train came the travelers took entire possession of it, their numbers being so great as to effectually awe the train crew, and no attempt was made to levy the usual contribution.

At a point a short distance from Leadville it was necessary to cut the train, owing to the grade, and leave part of it. That portion left was chained to the track. When the engineer was given the signal to slack ahead a great scramble resulted. Those on that portion of the train which was to be left rushed for the section to which the engine was attached. One man—I had talked with him a few minutes before and learned that he was a blacksmith—stepped between the draw-bars in attempting to climb on the cut attached to the engine. The engineer received the signal to go at the same instant and slacked back, catching the man between the bars. He did not utter a sound, but I remember the look of terrible agony, of utter despair, in his white face

as he clutched the iron that was pressing out his life, straining at it in an endeavor to hold it back. In a second the engineer slacked ahead, and the poor fellow leaped from the track like one springing from the path of threatening danger, to fall lifeless beside the rail.

The train went on with its load. It was merely an incident. One more life had been extinguished in the unfeeling, unfriendly struggle. That was all.

We found Leadville insolently garish in its transitory glory. Every man was a gambler in some degree. It was a place of red lights, green cloth, dance-halls, and discordant music. It was there I received an introduction to faro. The gods of the gambler were against me, and while I was successful in calling the turn at a great many games, I finally left my several hundred hard-earned dollars in a "brace" game at the notorious Laura Le Claire's gaming-place. I was then ready to seek new fields and make another stake.

Holding still to my purpose to visit the ex-

treme west, I journeyed forward again. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, I met a wanderer like myself. His name was McLaughlin. We sprung the end door of a freight car and found ourselves in possession of someone's household goods, *en route* to San Francisco. We made beds of the carpets and enjoyed ourselves several days and nights, leaving the car at Williams, where we quickly secured work in the round-house as wipers. A chance presented in a month or so for handling coal in the railroad chutes. As we could make more money at that work, we took the contract, the price paid us being fifteen cents a ton. We lost this position in a short time by inaugurating a strike among the coal-heavers, our demand being for twenty cents a ton. McLaughlin and I then parted company, I going on to The Needles, he returning to Winslow, where, I afterwards learned, he committed murder by cutting a section man's throat.

At The Needles, California, I went to work under an assumed name, on account of the Williams strike. It was there I took my first

step in the train service. After working in the round-house a short time, I went on the road as fireman. I did not remain long, however, resigning to become a switchman at Barstow. Soon I was on the move again, finally landing in Los Angeles, where I found work as fireman under Master Mechanic Gregg.

I was then past my 'teens and was crowding into the twenties. The service was congenial to me and I was making good progress. I had been in this position long enough to feel that I had obtained a firm footing, when my hopes were shaken by a proposed reduction in the class of engines to which the one I was firing belonged. These engines were the "monkey motion" of Stephens. Mine was the 46 O. C., a home production of the Southern Pacific. Firemen on the Cook's eight wheel connected, with the full truck, were paid \$2.97 a hundred miles, and allowed an excess mileage of 200 miles for 150. Gregg's proposed reduction was on the "monkey motion" alone, although these engines were as large, burned more fuel, and rode harder than the Cook

hogs. Instead of a full truck, they were equipped with what is called a "pony" truck, which had nothing whatever to do with the tonnage handled by the respective engines.

The 46 was standing on passenger, ready to begin its long journey through the San Fernando Valley, over a portion of the Mojave Desert, to climb at the end the picturesque Tehapachi Mountains. The engineer, his orders in his hand, told me to tap the bell, remarking:

"You 're not worth as much money on this trip as you were when you began."

Of course I was inquisitive, and he told me that a bulletin had been posted cutting the wages of firemen on the "monkey motion" engines. Although it was our leaving time, I immediately pulled off my overalls and proceeded to investigate. The first person I met was Master Mechanic Gregg, who began berating me for being late and delaying a passenger train. I said nothing until I had read the bulletin. Then it was that my inexperience in such matters led me into the error of

abusing the master mechanic. Of course, I was discharged on the spot.

It was several hours before a fireman could be found to take the run at the reduced wages. But finally one was secured, and as I saw the trail of smoke the 46 left behind her as she pounded away, I felt that I was on the tramp once more.

Here, as this narrative is beginning to drag, let us break the thread. It is my desire, at this point, to say a word regarding the injustice of the standard age limit.

CHAPTER V.

THE AGE LIMIT.

In adopting an age limit of thirty-eight years, this age being the average on all roads, the railway corporations have not been actuated by a desire to better protect life and property. Their purposes are manifold, but public safety is not taken into account.

Among the many reasons for this false measure of a man's period of usefulness, the following are prominent: It succeeds in the cherished desire of all great corporations of making their employees dependent upon it. A railway employee amenable to the age limit—and all save laborers are—knows he cannot leave his present position and obtain another if he has attained the proscribed age. He will submit to reduction in wages, he will stifle his resentment at the impositions practiced upon

him, chafe at the restrictions and bow his neck to the slavery his employer demands. In rendering its employees subservient, dependent; in chaining them hopelessly to one position, one spot, for years; in imposing conditions against which an employee cannot rebel without losing his employment, and with it all hope of finding another position at his chosen vocation, the primal purpose of labor unions—independence—is weakened, if not entirely broken.

The age limit stands as a safeguard around the hospital fund of every railroad. It rids them of men who are likely, through disabilities growing out of a long term of employment at the hard work and irregular habits of life attendant thereupon, to become hospital charges, and derive some benefit from the fund to which they have contributed monthly for many years. There are many better ways, as seen from the viewpoint of a railway corporation, of employing the vast sums of money withheld from their employees' wages, than expending them in the care and repair

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of broken-down and disabled old railroad men.

It is generally admitted that fifteen years are required to educate a man to a point of expert reliability in train operation. During the fifteen years of his apprenticeship he probably costs the railroads several thousand dollars by reason of his blunders. One cannot blunder without somebody paying the cost in this branch of railroad service. In the case of one who has entered the service at eighteen or twenty years, he has only reached the prime of his manhood, and become dependable, seasoned, and reliable when this standard classes him as past the age of usefulness.

This standard is the result of a false theory that only youth and impetuosity can hold its ground in the fiery competition of this industrial age.

Facts points out that the man of thirty-five or forty years, with fifteen or twenty years of service to his record, is then in a position to return with interest the money his education has cost the railroad. He is past the experimental stage; he is seasoned; his mind is

active in the interpretation of new and startling situations, situations in which intelligent action often means the sparing of human life.

What can be hoped of a standard which thrusts this veteran aside, declaring him unfitted for his work, compelling him to begin life anew in some strange walk, disqualifying him because of his experience?

It is well known that most of the railroad accidents are of the character known to railroad men as "preventable"; that is, that they are due to negligence or incompetency, and could not occur with proper foresight or action. It is also a fact that preventable accidents seldom occur on roads officered by men who have been trained in the practical side of train service.

There is no question that executive heads place too great reliance in mechanical inventions designed to replace the human hand and mind. While these appliances are of inestimable value as auxiliaries, they should be looked upon as such only. Unlimited confidence in them has resulted, time and time

again, and is resulting almost daily, in the loss of human life.

It is unjust to the man who has been faithful to the master he has served, who has been scarred and maimed and crippled in minor ways in the rough school of the train service, to thrust him out into the world and compel him to compete for a living for himself and family in ways that are entirely new to him, to make a failure, perhaps, in the afternoon of life. It is unjust to those who remain in the service to make their gray hairs badges of slavery, brands of subserviency and dependence. No matter how one may suffer on account of climatic conditions, or how he might better the prospects of his growing sons and daughters by removing to a distant State or city, he is chained to his post and must suffer. He may not transfer from even one point of the line to another, with the purpose of taking up the same kind of work, without submitting to a new physical examination. His years then rise up to confront him, and he is turned away.

CHAPTER VI.

SAM JONAS; ENGINEER.

Mrs. Jonas sat on the porch looking down the line, following the main track with her eyes through the yards, where the one switch-engine of the small division point was at work. It was her custom to wait on the porch for Sam to pass on the 1004 and get the "high sign" from him, the last signal of affection as he whizzed past pulling No. 7 on her west-bound journey. Every trip for the five years he had been on that run she had watched for him to exchange this farewell signal, sometimes with a baby in her arms, swaying back and forth in a rocking-chair; sometimes with the icy winter wind tugging at her skirts and tossing her hair. She would as soon have thought of discontinuing the holy communion as of breaking the custom.

The neighbors, work-a-day people with the

sentiment ground out of them, thought it a foolish bit of play for grown up and married folk.

"Now look at 'er," Mrs Gladdins would remark, deprecatingly, "a-standin' there like a seventeen-year-old a-riskin' pneumoney. I never seen two sech gandery people, an' them married an' with a house full o' chillern. She colors up an' grins when he waves at her jist's if it was some other man 'sides her husban'."

It was a midsummer afternoon. The heat shimmered like oil above the tracks, and from far away where the section men were at work, moving specks in the glare of the sun, the sound made by some lusty fellow sledging a rail came like the metallic protest of a drowsy insect. Mrs. Jonas leaned her chin in her palms and bent forward. The quick, panting exhaust of an engine letting out inch by inch, like an eager racer held in check by a hand that conserved its strength, rose and grew above the incidental noises of the afternoon symphony.

Presently the 1004 flashed from behind string of cars, her brass fittings glinting like the jewels in a stately beauty's hair, a roll of black smoke from her fresh fire streaming back over the tops of the coaches she pulled. Mrs. Jones arose, stepped to the edge of the porch and fastened her eyes upon the blue-bloused figure on the engineer's side of the cab. With a swish and a roar the 1004 dashed by, but the blue-bloused engineer did not turn his face toward the dainty white cottage, set in an oasis of green, where the trim little woman in a blue gown stood.

"It—it— isn't Sam!" she gasped, clinging to a post of the porch and looking, white-faced and terrified, after the train. "Something's happened to Sam!" Although she had schooled herself to believe something must ultimately happen to him, that they would bring him home to her some day all crushed and mangled and torn, the knowledge that the expected misfortune had at last overtaken him shocked her understanding and paralyzed her reason for a spell. She stood and gazed after

the retreating train, growing smaller and smaller as perspective reduced it, until it swept around a curve and was lost to sight. Then she went in, took her hat from the bureau drawer, feverishly jerked at the white apron-strings, and threw the garment aside. "I'll go and find him," she sobbed; "I'll go and bring him home."

The children were romping in the back yard. Their voices came to her through the open door. "How can I tell them?" she whispered, her throat dry, her lips burning with the fever of fear. She sat down on the bed. "I'd better wait," she said; "they—some of the men—'ll come and tell me. O God! I'd better wait."

She did not know how long it was as time is measured, but in the meter of her heart it was a thousand ages until she heard a step on the porch, Sam's step, and a voice, Sam's voice, calling her name.

"You're not hurt?" she cried, hastening to him; "tell me you're not hurt, Sam."

His face was colorless as her own, but his

step was steady, and the arm he placed about her was strong.

"No," said he, smiling to assure her, "I'm not hurt, Annie; I'm fired—that's worse."

She unburdened her heart with a sigh of relief. "Worse nothing!" she said. "I wouldn't give one of your fingers, Sam, for the best run, even if it was a life-time job, on the division. You can get another job, Sam, but—but—" The tears that plashed down on Sam's hand, which she held and fondled, told him more than words that would not come.

"Maybe," he said, "maybe. We'll see."

"What did they fire you for, Sam? You've never had an accident, you've never missed a minute in the five years you've been on this road."

"It's not for incompetency nor any inattention to duty, Annie, but because I'm an old man, and I was an old man when I came here—two years above the age limit when I got the job."

"You're not old," she said with asperity;

"you're not forty-five yet, and you haven't got a gray hair in your head."

"An engineer's an old man, Annie, at thirty-seven, according to railroad standards. I was nearly thirty-nine when I got this job, and I covered up two years of my life to get it, two years I fired on the Short Line. I falsified my personal record because I didn't dream they'd ever find it out. But they have found it out—how, God only knows—and I'm fired without a minute's notice, fired because I told a little fib five years ago an' took a couple of years off my life to get a job I needed. I go to take my run out, and find this in my box—just a note from the master mechanic: 'Discharged for the good of the service.' It says, 'good of the service,' and that's all the explanation I'll ever get."

Sam Jonas found time heavy in the days that followed, heavy and full of worrying care. Knowing full well that his dismissal had been ordered from a higher source than the master mechanic, he understood the futility of an appeal to the superintendent. His wife, how-

ever, with unbounded faith in his power to convince the superintendent that he should be reinstated, finally persuaded him, against his better judgment and pride, to make such appeal. The letter was finally written and posted, and, strange to say, Sam began to hope that something might come of it.

But the waiting was tedious. Sam had been provident, and the home he occupied had been purchased and almost paid for out of his salary. There remained a payment of but three hundred dollars, and the money to meet it had long been in bank. But, with that secure, Sam and his wife had indulged in some long-denied luxuries, a piano for the growing girls and some easy chairs, for instance, and the sudden check of revenue left them without money to meet current household expenses beyond a very short time. Sam spent his days awaiting for a reply from the superintendent in calculating how long it would be until it should become necessary to draw on the bank account to pay the grocer. Once a little hole was made in it, he well knew it would trickle

away like quicksand between the fingers, and then the black day would come when the mortgage must be either released or foreclosed. The prospect of the home being sold by the sheriff, or of being forced to sell it himself at a great sacrifice to prevent total loss, would set Sam pacing up and down the porch, his mind in a whirl of planning for some way to become a producer of wealth once more.

The railroad, the railroad. Always that. He could see no other avenue open to existence, it was all he knew. His feet had followed it ever since the day he had left the farm to begin at the bottom, on the section. And he knew in his heart that his age barred him from any lucrative position in future. He could not even become a shopman. There was but one place left where the physical examination and age limit would not stand in the way, and that place was the bottom, the section.

The section, as a laborer, at a dollar and a quarter a day; the section, to be scoffed at by those in better positions and regarded as

an inferior creature by all the industrial army; the section, where the sweat from one's body dropped tinged with blood; where a man's soul withered and his heart contracted, and he became a machine, inert, callous, dead. Yes, the section, where the heavy toil made life a bitter penance, where the fierce sun tortured without respite or pity throughout the gilded length of the weary day; where the hard masters, exacting from strong and weak alike the daily measure of flesh and blood, paced up and down like drivers guarding slaves.

It brought the sweat out on Sam's forehead in great drops, and it awakened a terror in him such as the slave feels when he is threatened with captivity after years of prosperous freedom. And often as he struggled with the shadow of the future the 1004 would rumble past, shrieking a signal which fell crescendo, quavering, long, like the exultant laugh of one who flees and mocks pursuit. It made him sick at the heart, and bitter. "I'll never go back to the section," he would mutter, "no, by God, never! There's another way, and

if you don't win out by it, you can at least die a man."

At last the letter came. The superintendent regretted that he could do nothing for Mr. Jonas. And as for stating the reasons for his dismissal, the superintendent must respectfully refuse, and refer Mr. Jonas to that section of his personal record form, filed upon applying for his late position, in which he specifically agreed, in case of discharge, to "not ask or expect to be informed of the nature or source of replies to inquiries regarding my previous record."

"I'd just as well let it drop," said Sam. "They've got me, and there's no one else to appeal to."

But Annie's sense of justice was outraged and she would not listen to a proposition of tame submission. "You can carry the case up to the general manager," she declared, her face flushed and her eyes snapping, "and if he turns you down, you can go on to the president." Sam caught a little of her fire and

another letter was sent to headquarters, this time to the general manager.

The weeks threaded past, and Sam had begun to draw on the bank account for money to feed his family. Pending the general manager's answer, Sam wrote to all the master mechanics he had ever known, in the hope that on some inconsequential road where the age limit had not been established, he might fall into a job. He received few answers, none of them encouraging. Then he took an agency for poultry food and tried to sell the compound to the farmers in the surrounding country. Some of them smiled good-naturedly at his recitation of figures—supplied by the manufacturer—which proved beyond question that a scant-feathered, unproductive hen could be elevated, through the medium of the compound, into a paying institution. Some received his statistics with unsympathetic sniffs, some turned coldly from him, some offered him chews of tobacco, and others told him to go to the devil and stop taking up their time. If he had been paid a liberal premium on each

package he could have given away, he would have been unfed at the end of the day.

"I can't do anything but railroad," he said bitterly, as he faced homeward after a week of fruitless tramping, his samples, heavy with worthless weight, in the handbag he carried. It felt good to get back to the atmosphere of the railroad again. To Sam the railroad was the spinal cord of life. Severed from it, he was paralyzed.

The general manager's letter awaited him. It was short, hopeless. The matter rested entirely with the superintendent of that division, it said, and his decision was final.

It was the worry, more than the fever, at the beginning, that brought Sam to his bed. He was down in the fight, unnerved, whipped. The suddenness and greatness of the calamity which had overtaken him permitted of no reasoning, no preparation to meet. The little sheet of yellow paper conveying to him notice of his discharge was an avalanche blocking his sight and chaining his feet. The future was

hidden, and thinking of it only increased its unknown hardships and terrors.

Annie understood it. She knew that Sam must be lifted to his feet again, and she too could see no other way open to future prosperity than the railroad. They had had their being in the railroad for so many years, and its life and requirements were their lives and requirements. So she decided to carry Sam's case to the president herself.

The city in which the company's headquarters was located was not a hundred miles from their home. Sam objected, weakly, then yielded, hopefully, and Annie arrayed herself in her best and set out for the city to call upon the president.

It was not the difficult undertaking she had supposed. There was not even a remote suggestion of a railroad in the great building in which the president's office was located, no guards to be passed, no questions to be answered. She was merely made to wait a little while in an office plainly furnished in leather-upholstered chairs and practical-look-

ing tables, then ushered into the presence of the president. Annie hoped for much when she saw his benevolent whiskers and bald crown, and was quite at ease when he smiled. She sat uncomfortably on the edge of a soft-seated leather chair and said what she had to say. The president listened respectfully, and a young man with a note-book before him, whose work had evidently been suspended to give Annie audience, toyed with his pencil and looked bored.

The president was sorry, very sorry indeed, for Mr. Jonas and Mr. Jonas' excellent wife, but the matter was solely in the hands of the superintendent of that part of the system upon which Mr. Jonas had worked. There could be nothing personal in the question, certainly not, but these matters were deeper than they sometimes appeared. It would be inimical to discipline, to order, to system, to interfere with the judgment and action of the superintendent. The president hoped that Mr. Jonas would speedily find some lucrative position, which he doubtless would do. His

service as a locomotive engineer would be a good recommendation for future employment. The president smiled.

Sam was worse when she reached home and her report appeared to make him even more despondent, taking away, as it did, the last hope.

"Here I am," said Sam, "sick and helpless, and that old hog turns me down along with the rest of them. I can't even go to the hospital, although I've paid my dues every month for five years. I counted it up to-day, Annie, and it figures up ninety dollars, a dollar and a half a month for five years. If we had that ninety dollars now, it'd nearly make up what we're short on that note that comes due the first. If we don't make it up, the house'll go, that's all. What right have they got to keep that ninety dollars?" he demanded, rising feverishly and staring around the room. "I'm fired, an' I can't go to the hospital. Say, they've got to give me back that money. It's as good to me as it is to them. They've got to give it back, Annie, or I'll make it cost

'em more than ninety dollars, by God!"

All night in his febrile ravings he talked of the money that had been withheld from his wages all the years of his employment, and from the benefit of which the loss of his position barred him. The next day his mind still dwelt on it, and Annie heard him muttering threats of vengeance as she watched by his side.

It was dusk when he fell into a sound sleep, and she left him to snatch a little rest. It was raining, and the autumn wind was whirling the dead leaves before it, banking them along the fence enclosing the lawn. While Annie slept, Sam awoke, one central purpose, one well-defined idea burning in his disordered mind. He arose in the determination to even up his grievance with the railroad.

"I'll wreck her, damn her!" he said dressing hurriedly. "I'll make it cost 'em more than ninety dollars."

The rails glistened dimly under the switch-lights, all showing white down the line, as Sam

stopped beside a target marking a switch packed with a long line of cars.

"I'll head her in," he chuckled, fumbling in his pocket for his key, which, through some oversight, due probably to the suddenness of his discharge, he had not turned in. He found it at length, unlocked the switch and threw the lever around, then stood looking up at the red light with something throbbing and beating in his temples like the air-pump of a road engine.

"Let her go," he said, reeling across the track, his hands extended before him, as one who walked in the dark, "let her go; I've done all I can."

A string of cars stood on the track ahead of him, and when he reached it he stopped, leaning wearily against the ladder of a car. The switch he had thrown was so situated that it could not be seen from outgoing trains until very near it, as a slight curve in the main line obstructed the view. Sam looked back at it and laughed. Up in the yard he heard the night crew at work, and he was conscious of

the fact that the rain was dripping from the roof of the car and falling on his hat. A quick-clanging bell up the line told him something was coming, and he started to cross between the cars. Nearer sounded the impatient warning of the approaching engine, and the cough of her exhaust came plainer and plainer.

"What's that?" he said, "what's that?"

The gleam of a headlight flashed a few hundred yards up the track, and the shrill, tremulous whistle of the fast-running engine rent the night. "The 1004!" cried Sam running toward the switch-stand. "Good God! I can't wreck the 1004."

He heard the hum of the rails with the big drivers grinding them as he leaped across, his eyes in a clouded mist, his heart wild with the fear that he would be too late. He groped for the switch-lever and fumbled it numbly, his breath sticking in his throat.

"Lord help me! I can't wreck the 1004," he panted, jerking the lever from side to side. It yielded as the dark bulk of the engine rushed by. He saw the twinkle of the fire in her fur-

naces as she pounded past him, then sank down beside the rail.

The night crew found him and carried him home. It was hours before he opened his eyes and gazed into his wife's face anxious face.

"I—I did the best I could, Annie," he said, appealingly, as one who asks forgiveness for a failure; "I did the best I could, but I couldn't wreck the 1004—you couldn't expect me to wreck her, could you, Annie?"

CHAPTER VII.

I RESUME MY STORY.

I next visited San Francisco, where I quickly parted company with what money I had saved during the months of my employment as fireman. That city was a yawning trap, a place of pitfalls and ruinous allurements to an unsophisticated or unwise person. I was soon stripped by the locust tribe and under the necessity of immediately seeking employment.

In those days it was no hard matter to find work on the coast, if one had the muscle and the mind for it. I struck out for Port Costa, where I hired out to handle sacks of wheat along the various shipping-points in the Sacramento Valley. It was there, under the terrible strain of that heavy work, that I learned to realize the value of a dollar, and to bemoan the loss of the funds I had so reck-

lessly squandered. From early morning until night I carried bags of wheat on my shoulders from piles along the track, walking a narrow plank and stacking the sacks upon flat-cars for shipment to Port Costa. After a few weeks my muscles and bones became accustomed to the labor and I was able to hold my own bravely and with little fatigue.

The work lasted but a few months and I returned to Port Costa and secured a job as longshoreman, staging wheat into vessels at fifty cents an hour. Not being affiliated with the union, I was one of the first to be laid off when work became slack. Non-union men were hired only when there was an extraordinary press of work or a scarcity of union men. As I did not contemplate following that class of work for a livelihood, and as I could not, had I been so disposed, afford to pay the big initiation fee demanded by the Longshoremen's Union, I once more headed for San Francisco.

My hardships were soon forgotten in the blaze of the city's temptations, and my money.

went as before, my good resolutions and repentance while carrying wheat-sacks notwithstanding. Owing to my associations, I was rapidly becoming what is generally termed a "good fellow," which designation, I have since concluded in the light of a large experience, means that one has no enemy save himself. My experiences since leaving home had fitted me for almost any manner of work I might find. I did not care whether I saved any money or not, my sole thought being to make and spend.

In San Francisco I worked as longshoreman when my money was gone. While working I continued to follow the rule of make and spend, with the result that I found myself forced to work many a day without enough to buy dinner when out of reach of my boarding-house. But I always got all the beer I could drink, and after I became acquainted with the ways of the water-front, could manage to fill up on the free lunch prepared by the various saloons for this particular class of trade. The

lunch consisted of corned beef, cabbage, potatoes, and bread.

When work fell off along the water-front I engaged as deck-hand on a boat plying between San Francisco and Sacramento. I finally shipped on the San Pedro, a large collier owned by the Southern Pacific Railroad, as fireman, wages \$50 a month and all found. The San Pedro carried coal from Tacoma, Washington, to Oakland, California, making the round trip in ten days. Through some dispute over supplies, I left the vessel while she was in dry dock at San Francisco for repairs. I afterwards returned on her to Tacoma, where I served on numerous boats plying between Tacoma, Seattle, Port Townsend, Victoria, and Olympia. At Tacoma I fell ill and was sent to the marine hospital at Port Townsend for treatment. And so it was that fate, playing the game of life with hidden hand, turned what appeared to be misfortune to profit.

While lying on my back staring at the ceiling in the hospital one day, an old friend of

mine, Jim Mallin by name, a locomotive engineer, drifted past. Chance had brought him to the hospital. He did not know I was there. He told me that he was on the lookout for an engineer, and that if I should be able to leave the hospital soon, the job would be open for me. True to his word, he held the position, and I was soon in charge of the Sadie, owned and operated by the Port Townsend Construction Company. My salary was \$150 a month.

This was the first locomotive in that part of the country and people came from far and near to see it. It was as much a sight for many of the old settlers as a steamship would be to some of the people of the Kansas prairies. Work was suspended in a few months and I was once more on the surface of the stream, drifting in the current of chance.

I reached Seattle in time to lose all my personal property in the fire that swept that city in 1889. Destitute, and with but my working clothes left me, I sought work in a saw-mill. I was given a place as carriage-rider, and remained there until I had earned

enough to clothe myself decently. I then turned toward the railroad again, and found employment as switchman on the S. L. & E., later removing to the adjoining yards of the Columbia & Puget Sound.

While working there I came very near taking a hand in a little job which, if it had been carried out as planned, very likely would have resulted in hempen neckties for all concerned. It was during the time of a strike among the miners at Newcastle, and the mine-owners were shipping negroes to take their places. On this particular night a score or more negroes were crowded into a box-car in the yards, awaiting the departure of the train that was to carry them to their destination.

At the same time a railroad ball was in progress at a boarding-house not more than a hundred yards from the switch shanty. The chief feature of such social functions in those days was the liquid refreshment, the most popular beverage being beer. A half-barrel was on tap on this occasion at the boarding-house, and before it had long been flowing we switch-

men concluded it would better suit our convenience to have it nearer at hand. Consequently a committee, of which I was one, was appointed to remove the beer-barrel from the cellar of the boarding-house to the switch shanty. This we did, after meeting and overcoming some opposition on the part of assembled guests.

After imbibing freely of the beer, we decided to have some fun with the negroes. We shouldered the keg and carried it to their car, and before long they were singing and shouting, dancing and capering and enjoying themselves greatly. Then it was that myself and two companions, whom I shall call Murray and Davis, none of us sane or sober, proceeded to carry out our programme, by which the negroes were to be made the victims of an excellent joke, as we looked at it.

With as little noise as possible, we closed and fastened all the doors of the car, and succeeded in imprisoning the negroes before they were aware of what was going forward. When they heard the doors close and

the hasps outside being fastened, the negroes became serious. Not a sound came from the interior of the car, where the prisoners were huddled in the light of two lanterns. With our cars close to the doors we could hear them whispering, consulting over the strange turn of events.

The car stood on the wharf, and the track ran back to the edge of the structure, ending in a slight barrier at the water's side. Our plan was to signal the engineer back, give the car a kick and send it over the wharf into the cold waters of Puget Sound, at that point so deep that the car would have been submerged many times its depth. The engine stood on the track ahead, several cars between it and the one in which the negroes were fastened. One of us signaled the engineer back, and another coupled the negroes' car to the string attached to the engine. Then we hesitated.

Our aim was to each bear an equal part in the proceedings, and it was finally agreed that one should pull the pin and the others signal the engineer back. Just then the ne-

groes began to awaken from their stupor of fright, and one of them, in a voice that trembled with terror, beat against the door and demanded that we open it.

"Come on," said Davis, stepping between the cars; "give him the signal, you fellows."

The gravity of the situation struck me like a lump of ice between the eyes as he laid his hand on the coupling-pin. I realized that we were about to commit murder by wholesale, and in a most cruel and savage form. I understood, too, that we had made tracks, were making tracks, that we could not cover, and that if we carried out our scheme, our own lives must be the penalty for our transgression. I caught Davis by the arm and pulled him back.

"Hold on, man!" I said. "Surely you can't mean it?" I did not stop to consider that I, too, had been as deeply, as blindly in earnest a moment before as he.

Davis looked at me curiously, holding his lantern so its light fell on my face. "Mean it?" said he; "mean it? Hell! of course I do."

"It's murder," I said. "We'll all hang for it."

The negroes were beating at the doors, trying to break them down. "If you're afraid," said Davis, "git to hell out o' here." Turning to Murray, he ordered him to give the signal. Murray, drunker than any of us, started to comply, but I dashed his lantern to the ground. Davis had drawn the pin from the coupling and stepped out to give the signal himself. Not caring to fight both of them, I ran ahead, shouting to the engineer not to obey the signal. He had heard the noise and judged something was up, so he waited until I reached the engine.

Murray and Davis followed me, and together the engineer and myself dissuaded them from their intention. Instead of pushing the negroes into the Sound, we coupled their car into a Seattle freight as an empty, after the conductor had checked up. Next morning they found themselves far from their destination, and the fright of the night before had caused them to change their minds about be-

coming strike-breakers. They deserted the car at the first daylight stop, and scattered over the country.

After this escapade, I left for Tacoma, where I became fireman on the Cascade division of the Northern Pacific. My service there covered a period of six months, and was eventful in wrecks and disagreeable experiences. While firing engine 503 I was in three head-end collision and one rear-end.

One of these incidents I well remember. It was the first day of April, 1890, and a tobacco advertiser was passing through the railroad yards, distributing samples of chewing tobacco contained in envelopes, with the picture of the plug on the outside. I concluded I would play a little joke on the engineer, who was in the yard office checking up the register with the conductor, as was customary in those days, when the life of a train was twenty-four instead of twelve hours. I took one of the tobacco samples, cut the picture from the envelope, pasted it to a little block of wood with some valve oil, and placed the imitation

plug in front of the engineer's seat-box, where it would tempt him the moment he climbed into the cab.

He overlooked it, however in getting away, and we left Tacoma with orders to meet an extra west at Reservation. The extra crew overlooked their orders and were running at a good clip past their meeting-point, which we were approaching at about twenty miles an hour. Red Lewis, the head brakeman, was seated on the fireman's side of the engine, and I was on the deck, watching the engineer to see him pick up the imitation plug of tobacco and give him the laugh when he should try to bite it. I was also changing my clothes, getting into my working outfit. I had one shoe on and one leg in my overalls, when the engineer squealed for breaks. Then he threw the air-valve to the emergency, pulled the reverse-lever to the backward motion, opened the sand-lever and then dived out of the cab. I saw the soles of his shoes as he disappeared through the window. I immediately jumped to the seat-box on the left side, reached for

the top of the cab and dropped off. The head brakeman had already slipped through the front window to the running-board, from which he leaped to the ground.

As I struck the earth and righted myself I saw the engines meet. They appeared to pause a moment and shiver before clashing in the close of the giant struggle, then they reared up like dogs at strife and an empty box-car next to one of them sprang into the air and landed on the hissing, smoking mass. The wreck occurred on the bank of the Puyallup River, and the track was so near its brink at that point that I believed the cars would be toppled into it. I had no means of retreating from the path of danger save by the river, and into it I plunged.

I made land a few minutes later opposite the wrecked engines, and as I clambered up the bank I saw my engineer digging the coal from around the boiler head, under which he supposed I was buried. He started and his face went white when I spoke to him from the side of the overturned tender.

"I thought you were under there," he said.

I climbed on over the tender and stood beside him, looking at the tangled, twisted mass of rods and wheels. One of the first things my eyes singled out from the heap of broken machinery was the trick plug of tobacco I had made not an hour before. It rested right side up, as tempting as ever. The engineer saw it too, reached for it and picked it up. Then he looked at me and grinned, and threw it at my head.

The engineer of the other crew was the only one hurt in the wreck. He was severely bruised by jumping. The fireman owed his life to the head brakeman, Sam Lawless, who, in order to save himself, was forced to push the fireman off the engine. Both escaped uninjured.

Lawless was new at railroading and that was his first wreck. He had formerly been an oiler on a steamship. As he stood looking on the battered engines and splintered cars his nerve left him, and he declared it would

be his last trip, that he would return to Ellensburg, resign, and go back to the sea.

"A man's got some show for his life at sea," he said. "Here he has none."

True to his determination, he resigned when he reached Ellensburg and started that night to "dead head" back to Tacoma. He was asleep in the caboose of the freight upon which he was traveling when the train was cut at Easton for the purpose of coupling a helper engine in the middle. In some manner the rear section of the train got away and rushed down the hill at terrific speed, striking a passenger train several miles below. Lawless was killed instantly, and his was the only life lost in the accident. It appeared that fate had set the time and place and manner for the strand of his life to part, and that it was not to be on the lift and fall of the sea.

The other collisions were of less serious nature and I came out of them all uninjured, owing to good luck and agility. But my experience had convinced me that engine service was a dangerous and hard way of winning to

the fore, and I had fully resolved to leave it when an event occurred which caused my dismissal.

I was called for a fast tea train, and on arriving at the round-house discovered that an extra man was going out on the run. It did not take me long to discover that he was full of "booze," and that fact annoyed me so that I forgot to attend to my duties properly, neglecting to examine the ash-pan before leaving the round-house. After we had backed down to the train I looked at the pan and requested the engineer—his name was Brown—to take her back to the house so I might empty it. This he refused to do. As we were starting a drunken machinist came along and asked for a ride. The engineer took him aboard, and he produced a large bottle of whisky, from which we all took a drink.

Owing to the condition of the ash-pan the engine would not steam, as I had foreseen, and we sputtered along distressingly slow. The bottle passed between the machinist and the engineer with such frequency that the lat-

ter was soon stretched on his back asleep, and I, too late, however, secured the troublesome flask and broke it on the deck. I had my own work as well as that of the engineer to perform, and concluded I would not be responsible for the running of that train any longer than it would take us to reach the next station.

When we arrived there, I aroused the engineer and told him if he expected to proceed he would have to wire for a fireman. He staggered into the depot and filed the request, which in due time was refused. A message also came to me threatening me with arrest—the tea was being shipped in bond—if I did not go on. The bluff did not work, and the conductor sidetracked the train and sent the engine back to Tacoma. I went back with it, fully intending to tell the straight of the matter. But on the return the engineer sobered up considerably and I changed my mind. He had a large family dependent on him for support, while I had no one to care for but my self. So I remained silent and accepted the blame. It was a serious offense to leave a

train on the main line, and as the personal record system was then beginning to be felt among the railroad employees, I was open to blackball, with loss of all previous record and the necessity of forming a new one if I could not raise the blackball, which, in this instance, I did after a good many years.

My next occupation was firing a steam shovel near Centralia, Washington. I left there because of some unwarranted ill-feeling I aroused between a widow and her intended second husband, and again went to Tacoma. The man in the case followed me with the intention of taking my life, but abandoned his purpose when he saw that I was among friends. Soon I secured another position at Roslyn, Washington, in a mining company's saw-mill, and later I became engineer of a steam shovel which was used for loading coal into box-cars. I lost that position through a controversy with the chief engineer. From there I went to Ellensburg and found work as brakeman on a freight train on the Northern Pacific. I was assigned to local freight between Ellensburg

and Easton, over the Cascade Mountains, and was soon promoted to conductor. I began to feel well satisfied with life, believing my star to be at last in the ascendency, when I was discharged for my previous trouble as fireman on the same division.

I received good recommendation from the superintendent to the general manager, stating that I was a first-class man on local freight and recommending that I be reinstated, as he had made a thorough investigation of my previous trouble and had found I was not greatly at fault. The general manager refused to reinstate me without the sanction of the master mechanic by whom I was discharged while firing. I called on the master mechanic, but he refused my request and an altercation ensued which I supposed would black-list me from ever securing employment on the Northern Pacific again.

I left Tacoma with many regrets for the position I had lost, which were deepened and accentuated by the time of depression, which was throwing its shadow over the land.

Again I shall digress from this narrative of self-concern, this time to write a chapter on the iniquity of the hospital assessment.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOSPITAL ASSESSMENT—A PERSONAL TALK.

The outside world which does not understand the hospital system, thinks it is a blessing for the railroad men that the corporations provide for and take care of their sick and wounded employees. The public does not realize that it is the employee who pays for and takes care of his fellow-employee, and not the corporation that employs him, or that there is from fifty cents to one dollar per month deducted from his wages to cover all such expenses.

Concerning this deduction of hospital fee from my wages I have no objection; but I do object to a fellow-workman who is in search of employment having to pass a physical exam-

ination harder and more severe than is given a recruit for the United States Army, in order to protect this fund from those who have builded it by contributions from their wages in times of prosperity. He is examined and given a sealed letter to carry to the superintendent, who, on looking it over, refuses to give him employment because he has a varicose vein or some other trivial ailment which railroad men are bound to have who follow the business any length of time. I want to get at that, to make it plain. What ought it matter to a railroad corporation if the men they hire have some slight ailments, as long as they can see and hear? If they have to take advantage of the hospital one week after they go to work, it is nothing out of the corporation's pocket. If so, why do they deduct fifty cents and one dollar per month from our wages? I am willing to pay more if it is needed, rather than see an experienced man thrown out of employment.

It was only a short time ago a friend of mine came west in search of employment.

He was hired, as the company to which he applied was greatly in need of men, and was sent out on a crew the same day. After he had made a few trips, business began to fall off. He was then called up for the physical examination, and thrown out of employment on account of a scar on his leg, which no doubt he received when a boy, kicking foot-ball.

About the same time a trainman came to my home city in the west on leave of absence. He was seeking employment and a change of climate on account of his wife's health, little dreaming that when he came west and was examined by one of our hand-made physicians he would find that his own system was not in the best condition, and that if he secured employment he would have to retrace his footsteps to the far east and resume his old position. The superintendent hired him, and when I next met him he was all smiles, thinking, no doubt, of the benefit it would be to his wife. I asked him if he had been to see the "doc." He said he had not, but remarked, "That's easy; I'm all right." A few hours af-

terwards I met him again, and I knew by the expression on his face it was "all wrong."

For what are we paying hospital dues? It appears to me as if the railroads want to use us as long as we are good risks, and as we advance a little in years get rid of us, afraid we may get some benefit from our own money, which they are obtaining from us under the false pretense that it is for the benefit of ourselves and our fellow-employees who might become sick or injured.

Some of the managements claim the hospital fund is not sufficient to maintain the army of physicians the companies employ. Why is it that many fraternal societies, which assess their members but fifty cents to one dollar a month, can furnish doctors and nurses, and provide for the families of their disabled fellow-members, by paying a weekly indemnity ranging from five to ten dollars? And these same societies have to pay grand officers and innumerable petty officers to conduct their business throughout the country, as well as to maintain some large institutions; likewise,

they are not always sure of their dues and assessments, while the railroad companies have a "dead cinch" on the fifty cents or one dollar they deduct from the employees' pay. And they give nothing in return, not even wanting to hire a man who has been paying hospital dues perhaps over half his life, because he has one joint of his finger gone or looks a little pale in the face, due, no doubt, to having long been overworked by these same corporations.

Why is it that the hospital fund, managed by the Government for our sailors from an assessment of fifty cents per month, could in a number of years accumulate such a reserve fund as to stop the payment of assessments till further notice? And the sailor takes advantage of the hospital more than we do, as there is no line drawn against any disease by the Government, and there is by the railroads.

There can be no objection to a company putting a student through a strong physical test, because if he is not up to the proper standard he can return to the farm or follow some other vocation, and if successful in pass-

ing he will make good timber for our organizations. But when they throw an experienced man out of employment on account of his physical condition, a man who has been paying hospital fees thirty years, probably, then they are obtaining money from their employees under false pretenses, and should be punishable by law for it. This is a matter calling for immediate legislation. In all justice the companies should at least be compelled to refund the money withheld when an employee is dismissed.

The courts have ruled that the railroad companies act only as guardians in these matters. Unquestionably these corporations have no power to levy and hold these vast sums of money without the free consent of their employees.

A few years ago the Union Pacific was about to sell the hospital property and confiscate the funds. The class organizations of the company's employees took the matter into the courts and, to the surprise of all concerned, were supported in their contention.

The courts ruled that if the hospitals were sold all the proceeds must be distributed pro-rata among the employees of the Union Pacific Company.

CHAPTER IX

THE FRUIT OF CHARITY.

I drifted back to Portland after my dismissal from the Northern Pacific, and secured a position as foreman with a grading firm, at work near that city. My intention was to stay with them until business should warrant my looking for a road position again, and I figured that would be when the wheat rush began on the O. R. & N.

My reception in the grading camp was rather cold, the old-timers looking on me as an interloper and early starting out to make life unpleasant for me. Several disagreeable incidents culminated, finally, in an organized movement on the part of the men to rid themselves of a foreman they considered obnoxious, principally, if not solely, because of his youth and manner of dress. It was there that

the seeds of a little deed of kindness, sown long before, sprung up into a defense for me and saved me from an unpleasant experience.

I was in charge of the camp, which was visited every few days by one of the contracting firm, and I had been obliged to be harsher than my natural inclination and wish in order to enforce certain orders and to quell the spirit of open and insolent insubordination that became manifest shortly after I took the reins.

It may be well to mention that the old-time grader had a well-defined contempt for the conventionalities of life, for the niceties most of us are bred to respect. I suspected from the first day that my unpopularity was due to the fact that I wore a derby hat and a necktie. My past experience in grading camps had schooled me in these matters, but I felt that, as foreman, certain perquisites were my portion. And then, I had no other hat.

I was at work in my tent one evening making up the day's time, paying no attention

whatever to what was going forward in camp. The flaps of my tent were tied back to admit the air, and I was working in my shirt sleeves. About dusk a dozen or more of the men came to the tent, stood talking in whispers at the entrance a moment, then crowded unceremoniously in.

"Well, boys," said I, suspending work, "what do you want?"

No one answered for a spell. Finally a big chap, with whom I had had a great deal of trouble, and who showed a row of discolored teeth and an expanse of red gum when he talked, owing to the trick he had of holding his quid of tobacco under his upper lip, craned his neck forward and said:

"Boss, we got a little sociable goin' on to-night an' we come in to invite you to it."

I was not aware of any society event scheduled for that night, but I expressed a willingness to attend and do all I could to add to the gaiety of the occasion, merely requesting them to tell me where the gathering-point was and to excuse me until I had finished my work.

"We're only a committee that's been sent to escort you over," the spokesman said, when I signified my understanding that the incident was closed by resuming my pen, "and our orders are to bring you along and lose no time."

I thought I began to see the meaning of the visit, and my anger mounted with a bound. I started to deliver myself of some pretty hard and altogether impolite language, and to look about for some weapon in the shape of tent-pole or shovel, my intention being to rough it up with them a bit. But there was nothing at hand, and before I could arise from my chair they had me fast, holding me by the arms. Twenty-five or thirty men from a camp back of us had moved up that day and joined us, and I noted several unfamiliar faces among those who had assaulted me. The story of my frailties evidently had reached them before they came to camp, and they doubtless were active in stirring up the demonstration against me.

"You know it ain't p'lite, boss," said one, "to go into s'ciety without no coat."

The others laughed, and forced me to get into the garment. "They ain't no ladies present," another remarked, "so he better wear his hat." It was jammed on my head and I was hauled out of the tent. Not far away the remainder of the gang was waiting our coming, and as we drew near I saw that they were grouped around a large barrel, their unmistakable intention being to souse me in it. The sight of it set me off into an uncontrollable passion, and I threw reason to the winds and began laying about me with my naked fists. I was making a very creditable showing and clearing everything before me, when I saw my enemy of the teeth and gums advancing with a pick handle, raised to batter out my brains. I knew my only chance rested in rushing and clinching him, and was gathering myself for a leap when another fellow, equally as large as my opponent, stepped in between us.

"Hold up," he said, "an' stand back here, youse fellers. I like to see a fair fight, but this aint fair. Parner," he said to me, tak-

ing me by the shoulder and turning me so I stood facing him, "I been a watchin' you. I know you, but I don't reckon you know me. Didn't you used to be a brakey on the Cascade division of the N. P.?"

I admitted the service, and he continued: "Thought I was right. I got a mighty good mem'ry f'r a man's mug, an' I knowed you the minute I seen you." He called to my mind an occasion upon which I had befriended and assisted himself and his comrades, and which I readily remembered.

While braking on the Northern Pacific I had a partner who was very strict about allowing any person to ride in empty box cars who did not have the necessary dollar for the division. This was typical of nearly all brakemen at that period, and no matter whether it was storm or sunshine, they used their best endeavors to keep those who could not subscribe off the cars.

I was willing to levy tribute myself, but I had a feeling of humanity that prevented me

from ejecting any workingman who was traveling in search of employment.

The occasion of which my newly-found friend spoke was a cold, snowy night. My partner had found the men while we were at a small station, and had put them off the train because they could not pay. I happened along and saw them grouped there in the cold, a disconsolate and shivering lot, and asked them whither they were bound. They said they were headed east to work on the grade of Jim Hill's road, the Great Northern, then being built. I immediately hunted up a place for them on the head end of the train, that part being under my supervision. The rear portion of the train was under the jurisdiction of the rear brakemen, and we each respected the other's domain. The conductor, of course, had charge of the entire train, but he confined himself to the caboose in the matter of collecting fares.

This story, coming out at a critical moment, swung the tide of affairs in the camp in my favor. During the remainder of my stay

there, seven months, nothing was too good for me. But I have often wondered what my fate would have been if I had coldly refused to give the wayfaring graders a lift that winter night, on the Cascade division of the Northern Pacific.

On October 9, 1892, I went to Walla Walla, with a letter to the trainmaster at that point, instructing him to use me as brakeman on whatever part of his division he saw fit. I worked until the wheat rush was over, then headed east for Pocatello, Idaho. I arrived there on a bleak December morning to find that Mecca of black-listed and outlawed railroad men fast undergoing a change. This place, once considered a stake job, was rapidly settling down to a solid working basis, and it was almost impossible to secure a position. I failed to get work as brakeman on the Oregon Short Line, and, as my funds were running low, I applied to the master mechanic for a position as fireman. He could not use me in that capacity, but said if I was greatly in need of work he could give me a contract

shoveling coal at Fossil, Wyoming. I knew this mean hard work, but, as I could not better myself under existing circumstances, and as I did not have clothes enough to flag a handcar, I accepted.

CHAPTER X.

A SOCIETY EVENT AT FOSSIL.

On arriving at Fossil I found it a community composed of railroad men actually engaged, and a few ex-railroaders who had taken up little plots of land for cultivation where any arable soil could be found. There was one saloon, run by an ex-engineer, and a general store conducted by an ex-trackman. The place was far from the refining influences of civilization, a mere dot on the map of the great line of railroad upon which it was located, and the only break in the long monotony of its inhabitants' lives was the flurry attendant upon the passing, at long intervals, of the sheep-herders, who ranged their flocks through the rugged land.

Ham's Fork, nine miles eastward, was the nearest station, and a sort of rivalry for the

lead in importance existed between the two places. Fossil was at the foot of a hill, and a helper engine was kept there to shove trains up the grade to Ham's Fork. Ham's Fork was a place where trains filled out both ways with dead freight. It also had some promise of becoming a lively coal-mining center, a promise which was later fulfilled.

Our diversions at Fossil were somewhat primitive, and our social functions altogether informal and free of affectation. One required no cards in Fossil, save those of the gamester, and no introduction save a clean shirt. I had not been there long when the first great society event of the season was pulled off. It was a sort of *olla podrida* in the entertainment line, opening in the afternoon with a clay pigeon shooting contest between the champions of Ham's Fork and Fossil. Fossil's reputation was defended and sustained by a conductor named Pehan, and after the match we all took a hand at the rifles, our targets being empty beer bottles suspended from a barbed wire fence. In the

contest I was winner, and my social standing in Fossil was from that moment assured.

After the shooting match the male population and visitors adjourned to the refreshment booth, to rest and repair themselves against the crowning event of the day, a dance, which was to be held in the log school-house in the evening. To the consternation of all concerned, it was discovered that the saloon's stock of liquor would not last the night out, and the serious question of supplies was discussed. The operator came to our assistance and informed us that he had orders for a helper engine to give an extra east a shove over the hill. Communication was at once established with Ham's Fork and several demijohns were ordered to the depot for the helper engine crew to bring back.

This extra run of the helper engine was made one of the events of the evening. Night fell early in Fossil at all seasons, owing to the overshadowing mountains, and earlier in winter than in other sections, so it was fairly dark when the helper engine coupled onto the

extra. Several of the young ladies, tittering like excited sparrows, had accepted the invitation of the engineer and were going to Ham's Fork and back, for the novelty of it. They were ably chaperoned by myself and other young men of the community. It was a merry party, and for the ladies a novel experience. The tugging and pulling of the powerful engine in its labor up the steep mountain grade, the powerful exhaust scattering glowing cinders broadcast into the night like a meteoric shower, made a scene to be not soon forgotten. The engineer and fireman did all in their power to entertain their guests, even at the expense of wasting a few scoops of coal and dropping a little sand to steady the "hog," as that type of engine was called.

With the exception of a few prearranged scares, fixed up between the engineer and fireman, nothing occurred on the trip, and the "hog" returned to Fossil with its fair burden and its stock of wet goods.

When we reached the saloon with our supply of cheer we found those who had remained

behind engaged in the discussion of an event which had recently shaken Fossil to its very foundation—namely, the discharge of the white section men and the filling of their places with Japanese. Tom Burke, the section foreman, had fifteen of the little chaps working for him at that time, much to his dislike. Prominent in the discussion of this new menace to the American citizen workingman was Buck Bryan, a gentleman of leisure, a collector of fossils, who had some unpleasant notoriety, owing to a certain quickness of trigger and freedom with which he removed objectionable characters from his plan of being. I am not able, of my own knowledge, to attest to the badness of Buck, but he had the name of being as bad as they are made.

Finally part of the crowd left the saloon to get ready for the dance, and those remaining took up an argument relating to certain boundary-lines, to settle which dispute a map had been sent for to Washington. Buck Bryan had the map, a big hanging affair which rolled up like a theater curtain, and was tying

the tape around it when Tom Burke's Japs filed quietly into the saloon.

The people of Fossil, generally, held the Japs as mere accessories in the commission of the outrage against American labor, knowing full well that the mere fact of their willingness to be employed by the railroad company was not in itself a crime. The crime was at the hands of those who sought cheap labor and imported them. Their reception in the saloon was cool, everybody evincing a desire to edge away from them, everybody with the exception of Buck Bryan. Buck remained in his seat, eyeing the new-comers with evident unfriendliness, scowling at each one as he passed.

As the last Jap passed him Buck sprang up with a yell: "What in the hell do you mean by trampin' on my foot, you sawed-off savage?" he roared. The Japs bunched like a flock of startled quail, and Buck, swearing volubly, began to belabor them with the map, swinging it out from his big shoulders so swiftly they could not dodge its blows. The room was soon

clear of Japs, who ran shouting toward their quarters.

It was a common thing to chase Chinese laborers out of a community in the west in those days, and the difference between them, with their rabbit-like disposition, and the Japanese, was not understood. We laughed off this incident and were preparing to go over to the school-house and join in the dance when one of the recently discharged section men came running in breathlessly and reported that the Japs, reinforced by their comrades, were coming to attack us.

The lights in the saloon were instantly put out, and we looked to our weapons, somewhat surprised at the turn of things, but determined to give the Japs a fight for it. We went outside and listened. A long plank, passing over the ditch of the railroad and ending at the front door of the saloon, was the only connection between the bank on which we stood and the track. Buck Bryan stepped upon the plank and stood there, a fair target for anyone below.

"Give me the first shot," he said. "I'll make good citizens of them, damn them! Give me the first shot."

The Japs made little effort to conceal their movements, but approached along the track in single file, stooping and making no noise. They stopped when they saw the saloon in darkness and apparently deserted, and drew together as if debating what course to pursue. Just then Buck Bryan raised his revolver and fired. The Japs did not stop longer nor seek to investigate farther. Whatever their plan had been they dropped it and ran toward the section house calling for Tom Burke. The rest of us discharged our weapons after them, aiming high so as to avoid any damage.

Tom Burke seized his revolvers when he heard them coming and stepped out to meet them. At first he thought they were going to attack him, but quickly learned that they sought his protection. We did not follow them to the section-house, but returned to the saloon, where a committee was appointed to wait on the Japs the next morning and deliver

to them the ultimatum of the citizens of Fossil. That ultimatum was that they must board the first train that stopped, rice-bags and baggage, and never return. This programme was duly carried out, and the Japs appeared only too willing to do their share.

While we were dealing with the Japs the dance was progressing merrily in the school-house, and after the committee had been appointed and instructed we joined in the pleasure. After the dance the visitors from Ham's Fork remained in Fossil, taxing the hospitality of that village to its utmost. The ladies were taken care of in the various dwellings, but the men were forced to bunk in the saloon, depot and school-house. Fossil had no hotel.

As the merry-makings were few and far between, the general disposition was to continue the fiesta next day. Consequently, next morning, after an eye-opener on the part of the men and a hearty breakfast for all hands, we were ready for any sort of sport that might be suggested.

CHAPTER XI.

I TURN SPORTSMAN.

After the committee selected to attend to the deportation of the Japanese had reported, we gathered to discuss the turn our festivities should take that day. While we were talking Tom Burke came in from a trip over his section and reported that he had seen a large herd of deer passing northward through Nugget Cañon. He immediately returned to Fossil, a distance of seven or eight miles from the cañon, to inform us.

We concluded the morning too far advanced to set out in pursuit of the deer, but at once organized a party for the morrow. There was a great burnishing and oiling of guns, and many tales of prowess and remarkable marksmanship were related while we waited impatiently for next day's sport. Early

next morning the party set out. It was composed of Flat Wheel McConnell, so called because he had lost part of a foot in his railroad career, Harry Pehan, Charles Hager, Tom Burke, Buck Bryan, myself, and four or five others whose names I cannot now recall. Each man dressed himself as best suited his notion of what protection he might need against the weather which, at that season of the year, was susceptible to sudden and violent changes. None carried any food, but each had a flask of the fighting booze of the west.

The trip from Fossil to the cañon was made on a hand-car. The railroad there passed through a stretch of the levelest, loneliest country I have ever seen. It was not relieved by a human habitation, and its only vegetation was the dwarfed and struggling sagebrush. The morning was clear and bright, a hard frost having coated the snow that covered the ground in depths varying from a few inches to several feet, according to location and exposure. On arriving at the cañon the section foreman located the trail of the deer

for us, then informed us that he would return to Fossil, but that he would meet us there with the hand-car in the evening and carry us home. Flat Wheel McConnell concluded the trip after the deer would be too hard for him, and returned with Tom Burke.

The rest of us followed the trail of the deer two miles or more, up the side of a weather-beaten hill and across a valley where the snow laid deep. We finally tracked the animals into a basin, a sort of natural trap, with hills on three sides. Those who had hunted deer before were of the opinion that the herd had spent the night there, and that we should probably find the deer by closing in from all sides. It was a small basin, thickly covered with sagebrush, and the plan of the hunters was to spread out in two lines, circling the hillsides, and close in toward the center. I being inexperienced, therefore liable to "buck ague," as the older hands put it, was assigned to watch the one opening of the basin, a narrow pass fringed with bushes.

After considering the matter I consented

to the arrangement, as I saw that if they succeeded in finding the deer they would naturally try to escape through the pass rather than over the hills. I waited patiently for about half an hour, watching the hunters climb the ridge. They had framed a semicircle, leaving the only point of escape for the herd as I had conjectured. As they were closing in someone spied the deer and opened fire. He was quickly joined by the rest, and I thought, unless there chanced to be a great many deer, my chances of having a hand in the sport were slim. I at once took up a position behind a tall sage-brush, removed my mittens and made a cushion of them for my knee, took off my cap and had a nip out of my bottle to steady my nerves which, I must admit, were thrilled with the expectant strain of the moment. I had thrown a cartridge into the barrel of my repeating rifle, and I kneeled behind my screen to await the deer.

Presently the herd broke cover and came on toward me. It was a sight such as I had never before witnessed, and which it may

never be my lot to witness again. The leader was a magnificent buck, and there was an expression of dignity and scorn in the manner he carried his proud head. There was no nervousness, no haste in the calm demeanor of the beast as he broke a trail through the deep, crusted snow for the others to follow. The herd came after him, single file. I felt like a murderer when he came opposite me and I took careful aim and fired. He leaped high above the snow and fell. His startled followers paused in the grip of their terror a moment, then bounded on. I added four of them to their leader before they were out of range.

Then came the stern chasers down the cañon, taking long distant and random shots at the rapidly disappearing herd, and yelling to me to tell them which way the deer were heading. When they came to the animals that had fallen before my rifle, they stopped.

"This is the one I fixed," said one, and "this is the one I hit," said another, until all the carcasses had been claimed. I was so amazed I could say nothing for awhile, but finally put

in my claim, to be laughed at for my pains. I then showed them the wound that had brought down the buck. The bullet had passed fairly through his brain. From carcass to carcass we went, examining the wounds, and all were found to be of such a nature that the animals could not have lived ten seconds after receiving them. My claim was then allowed even by the most reluctant, and we gathered the bodies of the slain deer together to await such time as we should be ready to remove them to Fossil.

We then decided we would follow the herd and, if possible, each secure a trophy. It was a long time before we sighted the deer again, and then they were well out of range. It was a tantalizing chase they led us over hill and valley, always beyond the reach of our rifles. The snow had melted freely under the warm sun, and we were wet to the knees. Our liquor was all gone, and I, for one, was beginning to feel weak from the unusual exertion and want of food. I was well satisfied, anyhow, with my part in the day's sport, and about 4 o'clock

concluded I would return to the railroad. My decision was hastened by a sudden change in the temperature. It was growing very cold, and my wet trousers were beginning to freeze about my legs. So I left those I was with, the party having divided into several bands, climbed down a ridge and started to tramp across a valley about one and one-half miles wide in order to reach the ridge that I could follow to the railroad. My progress was slow, and I was not a little surprised at my weakness. About half-way across the valley I began breaking through the crust of the snow, and this made my progress slower. At 6 o'clock, almost dark, I was still toiling toward the ridge, and the cold was intense. I think it must have been near zero.

Before I reached the ridge I was so weary and numbed by the cold that I would stumble forward and feel myself falling with a pleasant desire to lie down in the snow and go to sleep. I knew better than to yield to that feeling, however, and pushed on, finally reaching the side of the hill. I felt a little better

upon reaching clear ground, and about one hundred feet from the top of the hill, marked by a pile of loose rocks, supposed to be an Indian water-mark, I sat down to rest. I knew that I was within a short distance of the point from which we started, and where we had agreed to meet Tom Burke in the evening.

While reflecting on the condition into which I had suddenly fallen while crossing the snow field, I was surprised to hear two shots, repeated three times in quick succession. The sounds came from across the valley I had just traversed, and I knew someone else must be in distress. About the same time someone appeared above me on the hill, standing by the pile of rocks. It was too dark for me to tell who it was. I called to him and told him I believed Hager was in distress. He answered: "No, this is Hager. It must be Pehan." He suggested that I go to Pehan's aid, and I replied that it would be impossible for me to again cross the snow field. He then said if I would remain where I was he would try to reach Porter Brothers' ranch. The Porters

were ex-brakemen, and their place was in the heart of Nugget Cañon. It was about a mile from the railroad, and to get there Hager must first reach the track.

After waiting for about an hour for Hager to return, I felt the drowsiness crawling over me again. I concluded I could do more good by going to the railroad and trying to reach Fossil than by staying there, having in mind the fact that the fast freight, 24, had not yet gone by. I resolved to forge ahead and if the freight should overtake me, to flag it and ask the crew to carry me to Fossil. I realized that I could not place much dependence in a freight train, as it might have been annulled or have met some accident that would delay it indefinitely. I trudged on, still carrying my rifle, although its weight seemed great to me and my hands were so stiff I could scarcely hold it. I thought I might need it as a protection against the wolves.

After leaving the cañon I made good headway for about three miles. Then I began to feel the oppression of absolute weariness, and

a longing to lie down and rest. Had it not been for the light shining through the section-house window, plainly discernible, although more than five miles distant, I think I should have given up. I was so numbed that it was nearly impossible for me to move at all. I would fall about every hundred yards, and pull myself together again only by reflecting on my condition and that of those I had left behind. I was conscious of no suffering and my mental argument with myself to spur my feeble body on, was made and directed to a person, it seemed, entirely apart from me. I remember firing my rifle once (there was a cartridge in the barrel) at coyotes that were gathering on my trail, and that my fingers were so numb that I could not work the mechanism of the gun thereafter to throw another shell from the magazine. After toiling along in that distressing condition for nearly four hours I opened the section-house door and staggered in among a small company gathered there. My clothing was torn and my face and

hands bruised and bleeding from my many falls.

I was immediately beset with questions concerning what had happened to me and the extent of my inquiries. In my half-frozen condition I thought of nothing but securing aid and returning to help those I had left. I could scarcely speak, but my whole effort in that direction was an appeal to the men present to not allow the rest of them to perish. Get ready, I urged, and return at once with me. I would lead and show the way.

One of the women present, Effie Burke, the section foreman's sister, heated some coffee while the men removed some of my outer clothing, which was frozen stiff. Flat Wheel McConnell ran to the saloon and returned with a flask, which he held to my mouth while I drank. Under ordinary circumstances the liquor would have strangled me, but as it was it had no more effect than the pouring of water into a funnel. I did not even taste it. Effie then came forward with her remedy, a great cup of steaming coffee.

I could not take it from her, but they assisted me in drinking it, and for a while I felt very well. But it was not long until the respectable coffee, resenting the company upon which I had forced it, rebelled, and I became very sick. After a few minutes of acute suffering, during which I commenced to thaw out, I was again easy.

With this reaction I began to lose courage. In my frozen condition I was only too willing to risk all to return to my friends, but now a new terror took possession of me, a fear and dread impossible to describe. My mind reverted to my terrible trip along the railroad from the cañon, and my heart quailed as I contemplated the prospect of again facing the cruel cold and still, unsympathetic night. I knew it was cowardly to yield to such feelings, and despised myself for allowing them to come over me, at the same time casting about for an excuse which would permit me to remain behind. None offered, however, and with another cup of coffee and some food my courage returned. I joined the relief party which

had been organized and was then collected at the depot. The party consisted of the helper engineer and fireman of the day shift, the section foreman and a few others. The men were waiting for the night helper crew to get orders from the dispatcher to run the engine as far as Nugget Cañon with the rescue party.

The belated freight train, No. 24, upon which I had built so much hope, had just been cleared from Coakville, a station fifty miles distant, and as there was no telegraph station between Fossil and that point, the dispatcher could not grant the request. He gave them the exact time the freight left Coakville, however, and told them they might take their own chances in carrying the party to the cañon. There was no risk in it, as the headlight of the engine could be seen the entire distance between the cañon and Fossil, and the run was made in a few minutes, Tom Burke following with the hand-car to bring us home.

From the cañon we proceeded at once to Porter Brothers' ranch, to find that Hager

had arrived there in a state of insensibility, and that he had been found by one of the brothers lying in the road a short distance from the house. After he had been carried in, he revived and told them the purpose of his visit, and where he had left me. The boys at once rigged up a pair of pack-animals and started to search the vicinity, according to the meager directions Hager could give. They returned to the ranch about the time we arrived, unsuccessful. With the new additions, however, they advised that we make another attempt to find the lost men. The night was far spent and it was intensely cold, and we had not gone far when one of the new rescuers fagged out. The horses were also very much worn, and we concluded to wait until daylight. Some of us took the hand-car and returned to Fossil, where we found Pehan. He had reached the track in a worn-out condition, and had gone through an experience similar to mine.

We found him at the section-house, his feet in a tub of ice-water. His shoes were

frozen to his feet and we could see ice forming on the outside of them. We finally got his shoes off and did all we could to save his feet, but they were terribly frozen.

Other members of the party found their way in next day, having built a fire and remained by it through the night. Poor Pehan was the only one who suffered permanent damage. I visited him in his room at Montpelier a month later. He was still confined to his bed and was losing his toes one by one.

In conclusion I will say that we went to the place where we had left my five deer next day, and found them undisturbed. I had expected to find them torn to pieces by the wolves despite the fact that one of the party had arranged a row of empty cartridges around them. He told me no wild beast would come near so long as the scent of powder remained in the cartridges.

CHAPTER XII.

MERELY AN EDITORIAL.

There is no forgiveness in the plan of modern corporations, especially railroads. A man who has once transgressed in the service of a railway is black-listed for all time. All the great railway systems use the personal record, or black-list, and a man who has been dismissed because of his age, supposed physical imperfection or any other reason, from the service of one company, finds it impossible to secure permanent employment with another. The discontented, floating element thus thrown out of employment, hounded and tracked and ousted from every lodgment, forms a menace to society and increases lawlessness. The personal record is unjust as the law of heredity, and the man who has served behind prison-bars has a better chance of succeeding in the

world than the unfortunate railroader who is pursued by this phantom, deaf to the call of mercy and blind to the needs of women and children.

The first step in the criminal progression, for which the personal record espionage system is responsible, is the abandonment by the persecuted of his lawful name. A man may be a grave transgressor against the limitations and exactions of a railroad corporation and yet be innocent of any crime against society. The laws of railroads are not founded upon the moral code nor the statutes. When a man finds his name standing between himself and employment at the only vocation his hands have mastered, he often clears his record by changing it. This practice has become common, especially among switchmen, the wanderers of the railroad world.

Jacob Ray outgrows his usefulness, according to railroad standards. Various personal records standing against him, filed in his wanderings in the unsettled years of his youth, show his age to be, by this time, probably

thirty-eight. He loses his position in one yard and goes to another, perhaps far distant. There he eliminates the past, manufactures a new record, and begins over as Joseph Day. He works until the company grows suspicious of him, because of its inability to trace his past, or until someone who knows him comes along. Then the necessity for a new name arises. In many cases men have used the names of others who are dead, but whose records are clear. It is well known that many heads of departments are opposed to the personal record system, and that they suffer men who have been discharged because of their records to continue at work under assumed names. This will be found to be the case in almost every railroad center of the United States. At home a man may bear the name his father left him, and at work he may be somebody else. In the yards at Argentine, Kansas, more than a score of men under assumed names have been employed at one time. This shows the prevalency of the practice.

The railroads, however, are not above the

small trick of using a black-listed man during periods of activity, allowing his application for a position—his personal record—to remain on file until the need of his services is past. The employee, in the meantime, believing that his past troubles have been forgiven and that he is to have steady employment again, probably has removed his family—generally a large one, railroad men, and switchmen especially, being opposed to the idea of race-extinction—from some distant point at heavy expense, rented a house and furnished it. Not having ready cash, he has gone into debt for furniture. When the rush is over he is handed a paper, such as the following, showing that his application has been disapproved and that he is discharged:

(Form 1517 Standard.)

SANTA FE.

The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Co.

Employe's Service Certificate.

No. 89. Kansas City, Mo., Jan. 25, 1904.

This is to certify, that Chas. Knight whose signature here appears, has been in the service of this Company as follows:

Occupation—Switchman.

Department or Division—Argentine.

From Aug. 26, '03 to Jan. 16, '04.

Cause of Change—Discharged.

Age, 28; height, 5 ft. 6 in.; hair, brown; weight, 150; complexion, fair; eyes, hazel.

Specify conduct, and cause of leaving service; and if party was discharged, state particulars in such form as will convey a clear understanding of same.

Application not approved.

H. W. Sharp, Superintendent.

In this case it will be seen that it took the company almost five months to decide that it could not employ this man, Charles Knight. Any railroad man will see that he was kept at work during the wheat and corn rush. He was led to believe that his services were accepted, and that his employment was permanent. This man's personal record is not known to the writer, but the writer knows that he is a respectable, upright and honest man. He brought his family from a far western city to Argentine in the belief that his position was permanent.

He probably had been a striker somewhere at some time, or his age may have been above the standard a year or two, but while working

for the Santa Fé in the Argentine yards he committed no act of violence. He was faithful and attentive to duty. But he was discharged without warning and without explanation. He worked later, and probably is working yet, at his same position, under an assumed name. He was not a dishonest man until the conditions forced upon him by the railroad company made him such.

It is an easy stage from the changing of one's name for protection against some past deed or circumstance for which one is entirely blameless, to graver things. "I am an out-cast, anyway," argues the man who has lived under an alias for the purpose of pursuing honest toil, when he is pushed from his last untenable anchorage. He has yielded his identity in the unequal battle. Society, he knows, has taken from him his birthright. It owes him more than it can ever give in return. He preys upon it in dark places, and by devious ways. His downfall is complete.

CHAPTER XIII.

DAN SULLIVAN, ALIAS RYAN.

The farmers round about regarded Dan Sullivan's agricultural attempts with amusement or disdain, according to the natural temperament of the man. Nobody pitied him, and nobody saw anything pathetic in the wrong-ended but unceasing attacks he made on the natural enemies of his sickly crops. He received no more good advice and no more softly tempered well wishes than he would himself have given a student from the farm in his prosperous days in the railroad yards.

With Dan, however, it was a fight for existence, not a mere diversion or entertainment for the countryside. His railroading days were over. He was nearing forty, but looked ten years older, his hard years of railroad service having aged him outwardly. But, bar-

ring a finger missing from his right hand, he was as good a man as ever pulled a pin or passed a high-ball. His fault was in his temper, and his temper was to blame for himself and family leaving their comfortable home in a distant railroad center and taking up life in the short grass country of Kansas. His temper put him there, and his personal record and the barrier of the physical examination and age limit kept him there. It all came about through Dan's haste in trouncing the yard-master without stopping to consider the cost.

When Dan was let out he didn't even attempt to get another job at switching. He knew full well the disappointments and humiliations he would be driven to face in trying, so he yielded to the arguments of a Dodge City real estate man and acquired a half-section of land with his savings. That is, he paid all he had—sort of pinned the proposition down—and gave a mortgage on the land for the remainder. It would be an easy matter, said the voluble agent, to pay the remainder after the first wheat crop.

Dan's children were too small to be of material assistance to him, so he clenched with the plow in a determined struggle to win out alone. His aim was to keep the kids in school, with something to their backs and enough to eat, until time should come to his aid by giving them the strength to do for themselves.

The country was as flat and uninteresting as a map, and the doings of one's neighbors were not screened by so much as a hedgerow or a clump of sumac bushes. Wire fences marked boundary lines, and when a man plowed, hoed, harrowed or mowed, his labors, and the manner thereof, were known to all within eyeshot of his fields. The main line of a great railway system, the one upon which Dan had spent the better part of his life, ran like the shimmering strand of a spider's web across the treeless reaches, and the little station, sun-baked and storm-pelted, squatted beside the water tank two miles from Dan Sullivan's home.

The soil appeared reluctant to yield its fruits into the ex-switchman's hand. The

first year Dan planted little. He had been confused by the varied information on agricultural subjects which he had absorbed from monthly periodicals, and bewildered by the expanse of land. Good luck, coupled with a prolific year gave him provender sufficient to carry his family and stock through the winter, and by spring the immensity of the farm had been somewhat lessened by familiarity. Dan had spent the frozen months in tramping over his possessions and mapping out the land. By spring he had it all apportioned, a certain amount for corn, so much to potatoes, so many acres for alfalfa, and so many for wheat in the fall.

He tried to work to the schedule, but he found breaking raw prairie land with a single team a slow undertaking. The season outran him, and his neighbors' corn was ready for plowing before his own was planted, and the time for sowing wheat was upon him before he had thrown a furrow in the land set aside for it. Autumn found him facing the problem of want. His corn, with the exception of

the few acres planted on the land he had tilled the previous year, was slender in the legs and unprolific. He had not mastered the art of cultivating soil which fell from the plowshare in a long, tough ribbon and which defied both the erosive touch of the rain and the lusty blows of his hoe blade.

The prospect finally became appalling, and Dan thought of the coming winter with a tightening about the heart and a shortening of breath. Threshing and corn cutting on the surrounding farms eased the household over a month or two, but the work was transitory, and distasteful to Dan because of the coarse wit, unmerciful and unblended with even a coloring of good nature, of which his clumsy efforts made him the butt. It appeared that his former occupation and present struggles were known to all, and several husky countrymen felt the weight of his fists when their railery became unbearable. But Dan found his combative disposition standing in the way of employment, finally, and submitted in silence.

"I can't lick the whole county, anyway," he said, "and that's what it amounts to."

The turn of events was the cause of many a long conference between Dan and his wife. Neither had had farm experience, and before leaving the city they had summed it up and thought confidently of the independent life they would lead where they could grow just about all they should need. It became apparent, however, in the light of experience, that there were many things that the farm did not produce that were absolutely essential to comfort, even to existence. Five romping, stamping, busy pairs of feet must be covered as one incidental item, through the long months of winter, when the wind blew with such vicious spite and such increasing shriek and shrill that one who had not listened to it through the lonely nights could not believe possible. Those solemn conferences invariably ended by Dan sighing deeply and remarking, with a weight of regret in his voice:

"Well, Josie; I guess we put too much confidence in the job. I should have been sen-

sible and a held it, but it's gone now, an' the gate's shut behind me. No use goin' back to town. We got to freeze it out here an' fight for it."

Winter came on unusually early and severe. Dan had a temporary job at the station, unloading coal, which was bought by the farmers by the car load. On his way home one evening he stopped at the postoffice for his agricultural papers, and among them he noted a letter. The long, erratic characters on the envelope told Dan, before he opened it, that it was from Andy Ryan. Dan had occasionally written to Andy, because he had in him that rare quality that would not permit him to forget a friend under the cloud of misfortune.

Andy's letter contained a remarkable proposition, one that sent Dan prancing home with his head in a whirl and his heart in a flutter. It was nothing less than this: Andy, it appeared, was going back to Ireland, a relative having died and left him a bit of property. Andy's record was unimpeachable, and he proposed that Dan take both his record and his

name, get a job in one of the other yards, burying Dan Sullivan and his troubles with the past.

"You'll be safe for a thousand years," wrote Andy, "because half the boys in the yards are working the same game."

Josie didn't like the scheme. "It's dishonest," she said, "and they're liable to arrest you if they find you've changed your name."

Dan laughed. It was easy for him to laugh again, the first time in nearly two years. "If I never do worse than change my name," he said, "it won't be so bad. Besides it can't be called a change, really, from Sullivan to Ryan. They're nearly alike."

Josie clung to him and cried a little when it came time to part. "I wouldn't mind if it was under your own name you were going back, Dan," she declared. "I've always been so proud of your honor and your honesty, Dan, you know. You've never done anything like this before, an' it's hard to have you do it now, you that's always been so straight, and

that used to say the meanest thing a man could do was to lie an' shirk his debts."

"Oh, it 'll come out all right, Jo," he assured her. "I'll be Dan Sullivan just the same when I'm out of the yards, you understand. We're not all goin' to be Ryans, not you an' the children, only me, an' I'll be Ryan only on the company's books an' on my pay checks. To the boys I'll still be Dan Sullivan, an' when we can save up enough to come back here with the stock an' tools we need, I'll cut it out."

That night Dan swung onto the way car of a freight and dead-headed it back to the city. It being a period of activity in the various yards, and experienced men being in demand, Dan easily "caught on," the formality of a physical examination being waived for a time, as is customary when experienced men are needed.

"You're all right now, Dan," was Andy's parting assurance, "unless old Burley comes nosin' around there some day. Of course, if

he does, you won't last ten minutes after he gets sight of them cock eyes of yours."

Burley was division superintendent on the road from which Dan had been discharged, a man as devoid of human feeling as a railroad spike, and who inexorably enforced the various standards of service, age limit and physical requirements. Dan Sullivan's children could not have entered a plea that would have moved him to set aside in one deserving case the hard lines, and Dan Sullivan's sad eyed wife could never have wept tears enough to mellow his heart to forgiveness. Burley would follow him to the world's end, Dan knew, and drive him like a thieving dog from this new position, or any other that he might obtain. It mattered not to Burley that he had been harassed and imposed upon and abused by the man he had chastised. Discipline was firm against subordinates lifting their hands, even their voices, against their superior officers. A man with a temper, with a coloring of manliness, with a human heart, has no business selling his services to a great corporation unless

he can subjugate his spirit, forget his rights, eliminate self, and bow his neck to the yoke of discipline.

Five months passed and Burley did not appear. Dan was in the yard of a road where the physical standards were winked at sometimes by the superintendent, and he had never been summoned to undergo the ordeal that would have ousted him. He was beginning to feel secure. His debts were all paid, and he was a little ahead, and was beginning to think seriously of bringing the family back to the city. One night he wrote to Josie about it, asking her advice concerning the renting of the house they had formerly occupied.

It chanced that, the very next day, the division superintendent of the road Dan was with, had for his guest the dreaded Burley. They were comparing notes and nosing around the yards, when they passed the track where Dan was at work making up a through freight. When Burley saw him, he stopped short.

"Who's that fellow," said he, indicating Dan,

"That big chap ahead? Thought you knew him," answered the superintendent. "His name's Ryan, Andy Ryan—used to work for you."

"Andy Ryan hell!" growled Burley, "that's Dan Sullivan, the bruiser that licked Peters, my yardmaster. Andy Ryan's in Ireland."

Next day Dan was discharged.

Dan went back to the farm to take up the discouraging load where he had let it fall. Josie had kept the team, but all the other livestock had been sold, owing to the scarcity of forage. It was early spring, and Dan set his hand to the plow again. Profiting by past experience, he progressed well, and in time his corn equaled any in the township. When it was knee high, the rain began.

Never before had it rained so in Kansas. The heavy prairie soil became sodden and cold, drenched and soaked until it oozed water like a river bar. The corn turned pale and yellow, and stood for days without a cheering touch of the sun, and ripened fields of wheat tangled and mildewed and went to waste be-

cause they could not be harvested. For weeks no man put a plow in the ground, and Dan, utterly discouraged and whipped, gave up. His aggressive spirit was broken, and he moped like a sick hen around the place, complaining against and cursing the conditions which were responsible for his plight. He became querulous, listless, and garrulous; the constant theme of his conversation being the problem of existence.

"If a man can't earn his livin' by honest work, how 's he goin' to get it?" was the question he propounded to Josie daily. When she would sadly and silently shake her head, a spark of his old self would sometimes flare in Dan's breast, and he would hotly declare: "He can take it from them that keeps him out of it if he's a man an', by hell! that's what I've got a notion to do."

Such talk always frightened Josie, and she would soothe and pacify him, as if she dealt with some fever-racked person who struggled with a dangerous hallucination. Day by day, as the wet weather continued, Dan's views on

this subject became more pronounced. He found himself singling out the wealthy men of the community and speculating on how much money they kept by them and whether they might yield it without violence. Once he startled his wife by remarking: "If a feller held up the agent at Watertank, I wonder how much he 'd get?"

Suddenly Dan was seized with a determination to visit Dodge City, confer with a real estate agent, and try to sell his equity in the farm. He had unlimited confidence in the ability of the Dodge City real estate men to sell anything. His wife encouraged him in the decision, fearful that the enforced inactivity and constant brooding on the farm might drive him into some evil undertaking.

"I'll be back to-morrow morning," he said, as he set out for the station. Dan's railroad experience stood him for a ride any time, and he experienced no difficulty in reaching his destination. But he was not so enthusiastically received by the real estate men as he had imagined he would be. "I've got so much in

the place," Dan would explain, "an' I'll be satisfied if I can get it out. I don't want any profit."

He finally found one man who frankly said, after Dan had stated the amount of his equity in the place and the unpaid balance, "Why, my good man, it would be impossible to sell it for any such amount. You have already paid more than the farm will be worth in twenty years to come, to say nothing of the incumbrance."

The morning set for Dan's return passed without him, and the day wore away, shrouded in low-hanging clouds that now and then opened their flood gates and deluged the earth. Josie did not begin to worry about Dan's absence until the evening trains passed, but as night grew on she became anxious. The railroad crossed a corner of the farm not half a mile distant from the house, and she could hear every train that passed. After each one that came from the direction of Dodge City went by, she gave Dan due allowance to walk home, and then, when he failed to come, she

would nervously pace the floor, filled with a dread that some serious evil had befallen him.

It was long after the children had gone to bed that she fell into a doze as she sat mending a small pair of trousers. She started from her sleep as if called, a well-defined feeling in her heart that Dan needed her. She believed that he was hurt; that he probably attempted to get off the train where it slowed down on the heavy grade, probably where the path leading from the house to the railroad passed under the wire fence and down the embankment. She had often had such false warnings before, when Dan was switching, but never before had the feeling been so intense, so overpowering that it blotted out every other thought. She did not hesitate a moment, but sprang to her feet and prepared to go to the railroad and look for him.

She did not think of waking one of the boys to go with her, although she felt that some kind of protection was necessary. Dan had bought two large revolvers before he left the city to go farming, believing that he was

leaving the confines of civilization. They had been in the closet out of the children's reach since the day they came to the farm. Josie felt along the shelf for them. They were gone. At the door she paused and looked out into the repellant darkness. The rain was falling steadily, and the shrill midnight call was being passed by lusty-lunged cocks from one farmyard to another. She closed the door softly behind her, and set out for the railroad, running as fast as anxiety and dread could stimulate her feet.

Josie crept through the wire of the right-of-way fence where the path passed under it. The bank at that point was ten or twelve feet above the track, and she stood upon it looking down. The whistle of the Colorado flyer, signaling for crossings with the even measure of a telegraph key, sounded across the rain-drenched fields, coming nearer and nearer. Below her something stirred, and a light, showing white and red, was lifted from a screening clump of weeds. The man carrying it stepped to the center of the track, the red

red disc of the light showing in the direction from which the train was coming.

In a moment the headlight of the approaching engine flashed around a curve a mile distant, and glimmered along the wet rails. The man with the red light swung it slowly across the track, and Josie, her shrill scream rending the night, flung herself down the embankment.

"Dan, Dan!" she panted, snatching the light from him and dashing it to the ground, "Oh, Dan, Dan!"

They were well up the embankment and away before the long passenger train slowed down and stopped at the place where the light lay flickering.

"It was the switch light at Watertank that made me think of it," said Dan; "I was a goin' to hold her up. Lord! I'm glad you come when you did."

They walked on in silence, the heavy soil clogging their steps. Presently Josie stopped suddenly and turned to Dan. "It's clearing

up," said she, pointing to a strip of sky in which the stars glittered.

"Yes," answered Dan, a thickness in his voice, grasping her hand and clinging to it tightly; "yes, I believe it is."

CHAPTER XIV.

I AM SENT TO JAIL.

I left Fossil in the spring, and went to Pocatello, where I made out a new record for a position as fireman on the Oregon Short Line. I concluded to give the Short Line as brief a record as possible, covering up a great deal of my past by referring to the steamship San Pedro, from which I was sure they would receive no reply, as she had gone to the bottom in British Columbian waters. For the rest of it I did not particularly care, as it was not my intention to remain in the engine service long.

Here I was again obliged to stand a rigid physical examination, which I successfully passed and on April 6 I was sent to work extra out of Montpelier, making my first trip to Green River on the ninth, from which time I held my

seniority date as fireman on the O. S. L. Nothing of note occurred during my employment there, and I quit after nine months' service with a good clearance and a pass to Texline, Texas, from which point I intended to go to Texarkana, where I was to get a job as brakeman from Andy Leggett on the Cotton Belt. Not liking the general appearance of the country, I returned, without tarrying, to Wyoming, and hired out as switchman to the Union Pacific at Rock Springs. There I married, and made up my mind to settle down. But there were clouds on the horizon that were destined to obscure my hopes.

After a month of switching, I was assured a permanent position and given charge of an engine. Life ran smoothly, with no more excitement than was incidental to the pulling of coal from the mines and the spotting of empties to be loaded, until I was chosen delegate to an A. R. U. (American Railway Union) meeting which was arranged to take place at Green River, Wyoming, to consider the advisability of placing a boycott on the Pullman cars

handled by the Union Pacific. The road at that time was in a receivership, and the feeling of the brotherhoods against it was not the most friendly, owing to a reduction in wages made by the receivers, which had been restored by Federal Judge Caldwell on application of the railway unions. Owing to that reason I opposed the boycott, or strike, and pointed out that we could expect fair treatment from the receivership under Judge Caldwell, no matter what might be the condition in the Pullman shops. But the strike vote carried, mainly through the efforts of some who figured on bettering their conditions at the expense of the rest.

I returned home to await developments. The strike was duly ordered, and all was quiet and orderly for several days. Finally, the first train since the inauguration of the strike was heralded. On its arrival it was found to consist mainly of mail cars, with a few Pullmans. Outside of a little good-natured rail-lery against the "scabs," nothing transpired during the time the train was standing at

Rock Springs. But some striker or strike sympathizer had placed a piece of iron or other obstruction in the guide of the engine, with the result that, when the cross-head traveled the full stroke, something had to give. The guide doubled up in two, and the front of the main rod dropped, tearing up the track for a considerable distance. The engineer, after starting his engine, did not care to stop until away from town and out of sight of the apparently angry crowd, which quickly assembled, so he risked his own life and the lives of those on the train, by allowing the crippled engine to drift down the grade.

Shortly after this episode I was arrested on a federal warrant, as well as enjoined from trespassing on or molesting company property or interfering with the United States mails. I was kept prisoner in the fort at Rock Springs for ten days, then, in company with several more, was removed to Cheyenne to await trial before the federal judge of that district. Up to the time of my arrest I had not left my house for an hour during the daytime,

and had not been out at all between the hours of 6 p. m. and 7 a. m. during the strike. I suppose, however, the fact that I had been a delegate to the convention at Green River had branded me as a dynamiter, while, if my advice had been followed at the convention, there would have been no strike. Of course I became a striker when the order came to go out, because I could not stand the stain of being branded a "scab," no matter what my ideas of the justice of the strike were.

A large body of Coxey's Army was filling the lower part of the jail at Cheyenne, and the A. R. U. men were confined in what was known as "murderers' row," two little cells enclosed in a steel cage. The cells were just large enough to swing four hammocks in, two above and two below. Into these narrow compartments were crowded six men. The only exercise we could get was by walking up and down the cage, which was about fifteen feet in length and four feet wide. In one corner of this pen was the toilet, and it seemed to me that it must be a heart of stone or iron that

could resist the pressure of its surroundings and not break down and confess to crimes never committed in order to obtain relief, through the death penalty, from such cruelty. But, of course, the feelings of the real criminal may be entirely different.

On the day our imprisonment began, the sheriff told us that we were not regarded as prisoners, and would not be treated as such until we had been convicted; but before a week had elapsed, his words became a mockery. Days passed, one upon another, wearily, yet we paced the cramped confines of our cell without trial. Finally, after the strike had been broken, and the company could spare the necessary witnesses, we were ordered to trial. It was plain that the arrest had been made a trump card of the company, played for the sole purpose of getting men considered influential enough to keep the strikers lined up, out of the way.

The real dynamiters, those who cast their votes for the strike, and the very first to offer their services to "scab," were never molested,

while those who opposed the strike in the lodge room, but, when the strike came, submitted to the will of the majority and struck for all they were worth, were made to suffer. Those who caused the trouble reaped the harvest in favors at the hands of the company, into the vital machinery of which they had plunged a dagger, tipped with the deadly venom of discontent.

Our trial was farcical. After a few questions by the United States attorney, I was discharged. I immediately went to the office of Superintendent Malloy and asked for transportation to Silver Bow, Montana, having made up my mind to return to Puget Sound and, if possible, get employment from George Dickinson, general manager of the Northern Pacific, by covering up my Union Pacific record, and claiming that I had not been engaged in railroading since my dismissal from the Northern Pacific in 1890. Malloy waxed extremely indignant that I should make such a request, even though I had been declared innocent by the court, and made some sneering

and caustic remarks, closing by saying that if I waited until he issued transportation, my hair would be gray.

I returned at once to the court room and asked for an interview with the judge. I explained to him that my wife was then living at Montpelier, Idaho, and that I desired transportation in order to return to the west. He granted my request, and ordered the transportation issued as far as I desired to go.

My first employment on reaching Silver Bow was as a switchman on the Montana Union. I lost out there on account of my connection with the A. R. U., and landed for a few days on the Montana Central, only to go the same way as before. I then started for Livingston, Montana, riding as best I could on my last receipts from the old Switchmen's Mutual Aid Association of North America, and on my up-to-date A. R. U. card. I must say that I never received better treatment than I did at the hands of the "scab" conductors. A place was always made for me to lie down and sleep, and when the members of the

crew ate, they never forgot that they had a dead-head who might be hungry too.

On arriving at Livingston, I was informed by the train master that all men for the train service were hired by the general manager at Tacoma. I then saw that my only hope was in doing what I had at first proposed. I at once left Livingston, resolving to take my chances over the Great Northern road to Tacoma, as the A. R. U. was still recognized there, and the chances for traveling looked brighter.

In due time I arrived at Tacoma, and after trying in vain several times to secure an audience with the general manager, I concluded to go to work at whatever presented. I found a place at bolt-cutting in a shingle mill, and had worked there but a few days when the Northern Pacific advertised for mountain brakemen. That was October 3, 1894. I applied for a position. After being interrogated by the chief clerk, I was finally passed to the general manager's office. He asked me where I had been during the strike, and I informed him that I had not railroaded any since he discharged

me. He then referred to the trouble I had had with the engineer of the tea train, when I refused to continue on the run with him. I related the true story to him, knowing that there was no longer any need to try to shield the engineer, as he had been discharged for drunkenness shortly after I had been dismissed.

The official referred to an indexed book he had at hand, and appeared to find in it facts that substantiated my story. He also found it recorded that the engineer had been discharged for stalling on Napavine Hill, between Tacoma and Portland, because he was too drunk to handle the engine. He had a green fireman that time, and the passenger train following had to side-track him.

The general manager raised the black ball for me on the Northern Pacific, intimating that, while I had probably given him a reliable account of my A. R. U. record, he would depend upon his division superintendent to hunt up my later record when I filed my application.

Nine of us, all ex-strikers, ran the line of fire, and were given transportation to Livingston, Montana, to take the places of men who went to work during the strike, and who had not given satisfaction as mountain men. When I arrived at Livingston I was called upon to make out a personal record, which I did, omitting the Union Pacific record entirely, and avoiding my share in the A. R. U. strike.

While some were discharged on account of their records, I was not molested, as no one had any idea of my having been involved in the strike. I resolved to use my best endeavors to give satisfaction, in spite of the fact that I was sometimes forced to affiliate with the rankest of "scabs."

After serving as brakeman until January, 1895, was called up to take the examination for conductor. This I successfully passed, but resigned through fear of dismissal, which would have meant the loss of my Northern Pacific record, once more good and clear. My resignation for self-protection was on account of an operator coming to Livingston who had

remained at work during the strike, and with whom at that time I had had an altercation. I realized that he could do me injury, if so minded, by reporting me to the superintendent, who would lose no time in turning to the Union Pacific to verify his story. Then it would have been all up with me.

With a good record in my pocket, I went to Montpelier to visit my wife. After remaining at home for about a week, I went to Salt Lake City and secured a position as brakeman on the Rio Grande Western. This position I lost by trusting to a stranger in whom I placed great confidence, he being a member of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, with which order I was also affiliated, my lodge being National Park, No. 295. It was while sitting around waiting for our turn out that I related my experience to him. It happened that work grew slack a short time after that, and my confidant became despondent because he was not making as much time as he thought he should. He remarked to the trainmaster one day that it was curious how those fellows

who struck in '94 could get work, and a man like him, who was loyal to the company for which they worked during the trouble, could not make a living. He then told my story, and I was promptly informed that there was no more work for me on the R. G. W.

The details of my discharge did not reach me until I was in Portland, Oregon, working on the Oregon & California. It was then that a friend of mine, who had worked on the R. G. W., related to me the full story. It appeared that the trainmaster, Snyder by name, was a member of the Order of Railway Conductors. The general yardmaster, Jeff Rhodes, was also affiliated with that order. Rhodes was in the trainmaster's office when this supposed friend of mine had vouchsafed his information. Of course, it was too good for Rhodes to keep, and he had to make known where Snyder got his information, and how near the R. G. W. had come to a calamity by hiring and harboring an A. R. U. striker. I can say, however, to the credit of the trainmaster, that he did not keep the traitor in his employ. After he

had informed against me, he was told that the company had no further use for him.

After my discharge I returned to Portland, Oregon, and was successful in securing a position as brakeman, and later made my first trip as conductor out of that city on what was then known as the West Side division.

I was at Portland only a short time, being transferred to Roseburg, out of which place I worked both ways, eastward to Junction City, and westward to Ashland. There I made a good reputation and was placed in the swing on nearly every crew on which I worked, my experience as switchman, and also on local freight, being of great assistance to me. During one month, while braking in the swing for Conductor Dave Agler, I had only about 4 hours overtime, as compared to 50 and 80 on other crews.

It was while braking on this crew that I met with one of the Case brothers, supposed to be the most notorious train-robbers of that day in that part of the country. Not long before I met this desperado, I had been mistaken

for him in Roseburg, Oregon, and the police were about to arrest me.

We left Ashland on time with a little freight for points between there and Medford. On arriving at Medford I spotted the way car, and, with Steve Willis, proceeded to do the switching, while the conductor and the rear man unloaded the freight. We had finished the work, and were going to shove in and couple up, when I saw Steve take to his heels and run for all he was worth toward the way car. It was growing dark, and I could see no reason for his unusual action, but thought nothing of it as I walked back leisurely. While making the last coupling I glanced around and met a pair of stern, piercing eyes, which seemed to bore me through and through. The man stood near me, and had approached so silently I did not hear him. He passed the time of day civilly enough, and asked me if there was any show for an ex-railroad man to beat his way to Riddle. I assured him that, so far as I was concerned, it would be all right, and that I would find an empty for

him. By the aid of my lantern I was able to discern a face and figure which I was certain resembled me in general appearance. I asked him who he was, and he replied that his name was Case, and that he was supposed to be a train-robber.

I visited him in the car in which he was riding when I had an opportunity. He conversed freely, and remarked that himself and brother were black-listed on the O. & C., and that, as they were not able to gain a living at railroading, they were obliged to find some other way. I told him of the Roseburg incident, and he laughed, knowingly, saying that I had had a close shave. If it had not been found that I was so well known to the railroad people, he said, I would have been arrested at the time at the instance of his lawyers, he being at that time charged with the robbing of a Southern Pacific train at Cow Creek, for the purpose of confusing the witnesses on identification. But he got out of that scrape without my assistance.

A short time after my meeting with Case,

the same train was again held up east of Roseburg. It was plain that the work was done by railroad men, from the manner in which they handled the cars when they cut the train and ran ahead with the portion desired, in the regulation way. The robbers did not molest the passengers, and secured little, if any, money from the express car, owing to the fact that their charge of dynamite was so heavy that it destroyed car, safe, and contents.

While the bandits were busy in the express car, the fireman of the train escaped and ran toward Roseburg. He arrived there in due time, and spread the alarm. Superintendent Fields, of the O. & C., happened to be in Roseburg at that time, on a tour of inspection, and he immediately notified the authorities and began collecting a posse to go to the scene of the robbery. An engine and crew were ordered out, and a flat car was picked up. In a few minutes it was filled with armed men, and the superintendent ordered the engineer to pull out, remarking: "This is some more of the Case

brothers' work, and I hope we'll get them this time."

The car was packed with men as thickly as they could stand, some of them curious persons, going for the mere purpose of looking on, others willing to risk their lives in order to assist in capturing the robbers and receiving the reward. Fields had no sooner delivered himself of his opinion than two men pushed their way through the crowd on the car and stood before him.

"If it's the Case boys you're after," said one, "you don't need to go to the hold-up. We're both here.

No one appeared anxious to make the two stalwart fellows prisoners. On the other hand, there was an unmistakable and well-defined desire to draw away from them and give them all the room the narrow confines of the car would allow. Even Fields, although his back was against the brake wheel, tried to shrink away. He stammered something, which was lost in the coughing of the engine, and the spokesman, Jim Case, the one I had given the

ride, continued: "We'll go with you to the hold-up, and help you look for the robbers. If you find any proof around the train that the Case boys held her up, we'll surrender."

Nothing more was said, and the two men went with the posse to the scene of the robbery. Of course, no evidence was found that would connect them with it, and their presence in Roseburg appeared to relieve them of all suspicion. But members of the train crew who knew the Case boys were positive in their statements that they were the guilty persons. This afterwards proved to be true. After blowing the safe in the express car, the two men took a short cut across the hills to Roseburg, and were in bed in the same hotel at which the superintendent was stopping, before the fireman reached the city, he having followed the railroad, a distance of several miles. A few weeks after this incident, the elder Case was killed while robbing a street car in the suburbs of Tacoma.

The routine of work on the O. & C. ran on uninterrupted. It was on that road that I had an experience that proves the value of sea-

soned men. One morning on train 32, freight, we were tipping over the hill into Leland. Being a little behind time, we were letting her drop down, all three of us being on top, one at the head end, one in the middle, and the rear man two or three cars from the way car. We dropped out of the tunnel at a lively rate, and, as I thought, a little too fast for a starter, as I always like to feel the air brakes working when I first tip over a grade. I began to pinch them up a little, and set four brakes, but could see no change in the speed. We kept flying on, around reverse curves, over trestles and along yawning cañons, racing like a runaway. I began to think that she had gotten beyond control, when the whole crew set to work at the brakes and succeeded in easing her down as we were sliding into Leland, which is on a stretch of level track.

The grade from Leland to a water station about half way between that point and Wolf Creek is easy, and when we left Leland I started over the top of the train to ascertain the cause of our rapid flight, feeling that all

was not well. At the coupling of each car I clung to the brake wheel and looked down to ascertain the position of the angle cock, the valve by which the air is cut in and out on a car. When I reached the fourth car from the engine I discovered some men beating their way by riding on the bumpers between the cars. One of them had his foot on the air pipe, and in endeavoring to steady himself had completely closed the angle cock. As we were on level ground I did not care very much, but went ahead and told the engineer on the engine next to the train, it being a double-header, that he had but four cars of air, and that he could whistle the helper engine down in time to stop without running past the tank. When we stopped I cut in the air on the rest of the train, but if my experience had not told me that something was wrong, and we had tipped the hill into Glendale, where we were to meet a passenger train, there might have been a different ending.

After working as brakeman, and considerable extra work as conductor, business began

to fall off, and I found myself once more, June, 1897, on the slow board, or extra list. I at once left for Sacramento, where I filed my application, and was once more submitted to a physical examination, this time more severe than any in my previous experience.

CHAPTER XV.

A TRIP WITH A STUDENT.

It was while being examined at the Southern Pacific Hospital at Sacramento that I first realized the depth of degradation into which the employees of the railroads of the United States had fallen in submitting to the stringent physical examination. I had previously been put through the ordeal at Portland, before beginning my last term of employment, and as I carried a clearance, showing that I had been granted leave of absence to look for work, I did not suppose I would be subjected to a very severe test of my qualifications. But in that I was mistaken.

After the usual tests of hearing, strength of eyes and the faculty of distinguishing colors, to which I did not then, and do not now,

object, I was ordered to remove all my clothing for further and closer search after physical imperfections.

When this humiliating ordeal was over, I was given a sealed letter to carry to the superintendent. It evidently told him that I was a good, sound animal, for he ordered me to furnish the company with two tintype photographs of myself, one to remain in the local office, and the other to be sent to the office of the general manager. I complied, and was thereupon declared duly qualified for the position of brakeman. But no examination as to my fitness, from a practical standpoint, had been made. Being sound of wind and limb, a good risk, and not likely to become a charge upon the hospital fund, the company was willing to trust the safety of the traveling public in my hands, neither knowing nor caring whether I was in the least qualified for such important charge.

After making several trips on through freights between Sacramento and Truckee, I was assigned to a crew to do extra passenger

work during the Christian Endeavor Convention rush. The convention was that year held in San Francisco, and the press of people westward was unprecedented, owing to the low rates. During this rush all freights were abandoned for several days, and no local freight was handled at all. When the passenger congestion had been relieved, I was ordered to dead-head to Truckee and report to Conductor Paul Trembly, who was to take out the first freight.

The morning after my arrival I went to the yard office and found where the local was being made up. As I was an extra man and did not have any permanent stopping-place, I carried my valise with me. This I left in the way car and started in to couple up the air and look over the train. I had gone but a short distance when I met the conductor, who asked me if I was going out on the run. I told him I had been sent from Sacramento for that purpose.

"Have you ever done much railroading?" he asked.

"No, not much," I replied.

He at once began berating the officials for giving him two students to do the heavy local work on the mountains, especially when the local had not run for several days. I asked him where he wanted me to work, whether I should get the engine or work behind. He said there was another student after the engine. After a few more uncomplimentary remarks, he proceeded on his way to the caboose to rid himself of his armful of waybills. On his way back he met the yardmaster, one McGovern, and began telling his troubles to him. McGovern told him he knew one of his men, referring to me, was not a student, as he had switched with him at Green River, Wyoming. The conductor immediately hunted me up and, all smiles, said he wanted me to handle the switch list and assist him all I could.

I saw there was no use in trying, in the face of circumstances, to hide my identity, so I owned up to the acquaintance and previous experience with McGovern, telling him also that I was a stranger on the Sacramento di-

vision. I asked him at what points he had cars to set out, and for what stations he had way freight, and whether there were agents to receive it or whether the bills must be left in bill-boxes. He said it had been his intention to ride with me through the snow-sheds in the peddler (way freight car), but my questions showed him that I was qualified, so he handed me a bunch of bills and told me to look out for them. I immediately made out a list of work and gave it to the engineer, so he would know where to stop, and also where to be on the alert for signals.

Our first work was an order to set out and pick up some loads at an ice spur. I asked the engineer if he knew anything about how the tracks were arranged. He said he did not, as he was a regular passenger man, and that he was merely working local for that trip in order to get his engine back to Sacramento. I wanted to gain a knowledge of the lay of the tracks, in order to avoid taking in my set-outs, which were at the head end, and a possible chance of having to double back out with

them if there was no place to do switching at the end of the spur. I took my chances, however, and went down with the light engine, to find that I had luck on my side. I also ascertained from the foreman of the gang that was repairing the ice-houses that the cars we had for him were to be spotted at the farther end of the spur. After cutting in the set-outs, I switched out what cars we needed, then shoved in and spotted the cars that remained, at the different places designated for the purpose.

We worked on uneventfully all day. The sun was setting when we arrived at Newcastle, where we had considerable switching to do, as well as five or six thousand pounds of freight to unload. After stopping the train to clear the cross-over, I told the engineer to release the air in order to determine whether or not the hand brakes I had set would hold the train from running away down the hill if the air should leak out while we were on the house track unloading freight. After seeing that the train was secure, I cut off the way car and backed in on the house track behind the de-

pot. We were then working short-handed, as the rear brakeman was back flagging against a local passenger. After unloading our freight, we loaded what consignments we had, the last being a lot of empty beer-cases.

As our time was getting short, I suggested to the conductor that we pile the stuff in indiscriminately, and that I would sort it out while the head man was taking the engine and cars around and coupling up the train. I also noticed that the order-board, which was clear when we passed it, was now red, and called the conductor's attention to it. He at once went into the telegraph office to get orders, and the head man coupled up the air, then climbed on top and kicked off the brakes, so as to be ready to go as soon as the flagman came in.

I was busy assorting freight in the car by the light of my lantern, darkness having fallen, when I felt the train moving. Thinking the conductor had signaled the engineer ahead for some reason, I thought nothing of it until I heard the engineer squealing frantically for brakes. I then realized that the air had not

been cut in on the train and that it was running away.

I made my way over the piles of freight to the car door and jumped out. The train had gained considerable speed and was rumbling along faster and faster as each car passed me. I stood debating with myself whether or not I should risk my life by boarding the train and attempting to hold it by the hand brakes. I did not know how long or how steep the hill was, nor what awaited us at the bottom of it. I looked for the student, but could not see his light anywhere, and my feeling against him was as intense, because of his forgetfulness in failing to cut in the air, as if the train rushing past me to some unknown fate had been my personal property.

A man thinks a great deal in half a minute, and I suppose I summed up the situation from every conceivable standpoint while the first ten cars passed me. My inclination was about evenly balanced between chancing it on the train and allowing it to have its run out. Experience told me that the odds were against

my holding the long, heavy train, with nothing but a long-legged passenger engine to help me. But duty mingled its mandate with the nervous, tremulous call of the whistle, and when the fifteenth car, or thereabout, came by, I caught on. I was about midway of the train, and as soon as I reached the top I went to work on the brakes, determined to set all between the point where I climbed up and the way car. I reasoned that, if I did not succeed in stopping or steadying them up, I would at least be on top of the pile if anything went wrong.

After setting a couple of brakes I came to a flat car loaded with machinery. We had picked it up at Colfax, and it was a "bad order." It took me some time to work my way across the flat, and by the time I climbed up on the "freezers" next the caboose we were going at a terrific speed. The "freezers" I knew were in good shape, as they had just come out of the shop, and I hoped to be able to do some good with them. I worked on to the caboose, and felt relieved when I saw we

were not gaining any headway. I then started back, doubling up on the brakes I had already set, keeping a close watch ahead, not knowing what moment something might show up, as I did not know what the order board was out for at Newcastle.

The engineer had never ceased calling for for brakes. Imagine my surprise on looking ahead to see the student rise up from the roof of a car near the engine, give a stop signal with his lantern and immediately lie down again. This he did at every signal for brakes from the whistle, not daring to trust his precious life by setting a brake himself.

Luckily, the grade was not very heavy, and after running a considerable distance we struck a number of reverse curves, which brought us to a sudden stop. The position in which the train stopped, together with the fact that I had gone over the brake twice, drew them so tight we could not let them off. The student and I doubled on them, but could not budge them. I suggested to him that we set the air, and then remembered that there

probably was no air. I asked him about it, but he knew nothing at all, and we then each took a side of the train and inspected the cars toward the engine. At the point where the student had coupled up we found the angle cock had not been cut in. There had been air on but a few of the forward cars. I cut the air in and had the engineer set the brakes. This made it an easy matter to let off the tightly screwed hand brakes.

The conductor had just received his orders and had reached the door as the tail lights twinkled down the track a hundred yards from the depot. Realizing that his train was running away, he immediately took off down the grade after it. The flagman also saw us disappear and followed. They both overtook us before we had all the brakes released. As luck would have it, the orders the conductor had received were time on the train following us.

We completed the run without further incident. When we reached Sacramento, Conductor Trembly told me that he intended to

state the facts of the trip, and especially the runaway, to Jones, the trainmaster, and try and keep me on the crew with him. I met him next morning and he informed me that Jones had discredited his story, charging that he had manufactured it for the purpose of getting rid of the student and acquiring an experienced man in his place. Such is the reward a practical man receives for endangering his own life, when in perfect safety, and, had there been a passenger train due, probably saving the lives of many others.

The next trip I was pulled off the crew, and the student was killed, being knocked off in the snow sheds.

The Christian Endeavor rush being over, and the attendant freight congestion being relieved, I was again on the extra list, and, as it was a long one, I could not see any profit in remaining in Sacramento. I asked permission to transfer to the Salt Lake division, but before going to work I took a leave of absence and visited Ogden with the intention of trying to get a job out of that place. My applica-

tion was duly made, and I was summoned before the company's medical examiner. What was my surprise when I was informed after the examination, that I failed to come up to the required physical standard. This was all the more humiliating in face of the fact that my clearances showed that I had rendered good and satisfactory services on all the divisions of that road on which I had worked.

I returned to Wadsworth, said nothing about my failure to pass at Ogden, and showed my clearances to the examining physician at that point, stating how long I had been in the Southern Pacific's employ, and that I was merely transferring from one division of that road to another on account of slack work. It may be well to state here that a clearance is a paper given an employee who leaves the service of a railroad. It shows his term of employment, the nature of the same, the reason for leaving and whether or not his services were satisfactory.

The doctor said it made no difference what my clearance showed, his duty was plain. He

must examine me. He did so, and I passed. I secured a run out of Winnemucca on the chain gang, running both ways, eastward to Carlin and westward to Wadsworth. This run I gave up for a regular position as switchman at Winnemucca. After a time I grew weary of life in the desert and took a leave of absence, going to Oakland, California, where I secured a position with the same company, after again passing a medical examination in San Francisco. I then resigned my position at Winnemucca and sent for my clearance, of which the following is a copy:

SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY.

Office of the Superintendent. Pacific System.
Salt Lake Division. Ogden, Utah, Aug. 19, 1899.

Clearance Card

Name, William John Pinkerton, Description, as filed with Personal Record, dated August 8, 1897.

Age, 30; height, 6 feet; weight, 190 lbs.; color of eyes, blue; color of hair, dark; complexion, dark.

Occupation, and time of service in each capacity: Employed as brakeman, August 8, 1897, and serving as brakeman and switchman until the present date.

Character generally, good.

Date of leaving service, and cause. Resigned
August 19, 1899.

Remarks; good railroad man.

J. S. Noble, superintendent.

Note:—This letter shows the standing of the holder at the time he left the service only, does not cover the time subsequent thereto, and is not a guarantee for his future conduct.

The medical examination at San Francisco was the most rigid to which I have ever been submitted, and I do not understand how I succeeded in passing there when I failed a less severe test at Ogden. The San Francisco examination impressed me with a new idea in this relation, and that was that these stringent tests will result in making the experienced man exercise more than ordinary care to preserve himself so as to be in condition to meet the physical requirements when forced to seek a new position, even to the extent of sacrificing property and the lives of the traveling public.

The public is the sufferer, more than the railroad employees who are assorted out by

this unjust standard of supposed physical perfection, because innocent lives are sacrificed on the altar of corporation greed by over-careful-of-self-men, and inexperienced students who fill the places of seasoned timber that has been rejected as useless.

Not long ago the general claim agents of the various railroads held a convention. The announcement that went out from that gathering probably was passed unheeded and not understood by the general readers of the newspapers, but to every railway employee it meant the tightening of the straps that hold them in a disgraceful bondage.

The convention announced that it was being held for the purpose of adopting a more rigid system of physical examination, personal record, and age limit, and for perfecting a method of informing a sister corporation whether or not a worker was to be given a position if he should resign from the service of his employer.

The public was led to believe that it was another safeguard thrown out by the watchful

capitalists for its protection, while in fact, it was merely an elaboration, a span in the perfect fence of black-list and ostracism. The general claim agent is a part of the legal department of a railway, and it is to the interest of this department to lessen chances of liability for damages. This is especially true in the hiring of men who might have received injuries while employed by other corporations, thereby leaving them more susceptible to total disability and the employing company more liable for damages. Physical perfection, therefore, is rated above mental equipment and experience. The student with the sun tan of the corn-field on his brow, and with no more intimate knowledge of train service than is to be acquired by loafing around the station on rainy days, or by watching the trains pass the borders of his fields, stands a better chance for employment than the veteran who is out of work. If the farmer is under the age limit, and physically sound, he is accepted; if the veteran is thirty-six, minus a finger-joint or "flat wheeled" because of a leg broken in

some railroad's service and poorly set in the expensive hospital or some bungling local physician's office, he is out of the game for good.

The numerous accidents to passenger trains, and the appalling loss of life in almost hundreds of cases, during the past two years, have furnished much material for newspaper editorials on the dangers of modern travel.

The fact is, travel by land has become a perilous undertaking, but this is not due to increased risk growing out of speed. Few trains leave the track while running. The grave accidents are those that occur at switches and through collisions. Yet no one knows, except the veteran railroad man, that the "open switch, the work of some miscreant," as the papers report, where fifty human lives are lost, is more than likely the oversight or lapse of memory on the part of some student brakeman.

Miscreants and tramps are seldom provided with switch keys for one thing, and it may be said to the credit of humankind that few men,

no matter how criminal or heartless, will wantonly sacrifice the lives of men, women, and children against whom they have no grievance, and to them entirely unknown. The miscreant could as well wreck a train in some isolated spot as at a station switch, and if inclined to do so he doubtless would. The lack of a switch key would not deter him nor cripple him in the least if his mind was bent on destruction.

Modern travel by rail is fraught with danger, grim, grisly, and unknown. But the wandering tramp and the desperado bent on spoil are not menacing, no more so than the rapidity of trains. The one word that explains it all is INCOMPETENCY.

CHAPTER XVI.

A TRIBUTE TO THE SECTION BOSS.

There are moments, when one is speeding on a journey by rail, that flashes of impending danger, forebodings of coming disaster, mar the pleasures of the exhilarating flight. The traveler sometimes wakes at night, suddenly as if a hand had parted the curtains of his berth, and had rudely called him back to a full and instantaneous understanding of his situation. Then he lies awake, his heart straining with the load of dread, sinking and quailing as the heavy train dashes in swaying, roaring recklessness over resounding bridges, across frail trestles, along narrow cliffs, down steep mountain grades; now keeling to the sudden check of a sharp curve, righting anon like a stout ship in a storm, only to be hurled again out of the perpendicular and to spin on

the rim of the wheels, it seems, around a curve.

Then the traveler's heart contracts, his hands clench and the sweat breaks out upon his brow. What if the hurling weight of the train, obeying the law of nature, should force the engine from the track at the tangent, and all should go crashing down the terrible, dark, jagged sides of some unmeasured depth! The whistle sounds, sharp, incisive, mandatory; crying to all ahead to clear the way, warning the laggard to hasten his steps across the steel-girded roadway upon which the pulsing monster is, for a moment, supreme.

Ah! the traveler sighs. His tense muscles relax, his tingling nerves grow calm, as if an opiate had been injected into his veins, and sleep descends again upon his eyes. A human hand has caused the blind machine to obey its touch; a human hand is upon the controlling throttle valve; human eyes peer ahead where the beams from the headlight pierce the night; a human mind, after all, is the power that guides and curbs this thing of mighty strength. Ah! sighs the traveler; all is well.

At the end of the division the engineer steps down, another engine is coupled on, another man takes his place. He has driven the fire-fed machine a hundred miles, perhaps, and his mind has been its mind. He has performed his task without a mistake, without accident, and much credit is due him. He has followed, with the confident trust of a child, the firm and secure roadway, so schooled by experience in the knowledge that it is safe that he has not given it a thought. There is not in his heart a springing warmth of gratitude or thankfulness toward those who have trimmed the road for his passage; not a care for the humble, obscure heroes who have made sure that each spike, bolt, strap, rail, was in perfect order, and each bearing its part; that every frog point was at the proper angle, each guard rail fast, every inch of the weary miles of track true to the gauge. And the traveler, asleep in his berth, peaceful again in his thoughts of security, has not been plagued by the nightmare of a broken rail or splice, of an improperly elevated curve.

He has read much of the cool judgment of the engineer, and of his heroic devotion to duty, and he believes that the safety of the train is in the hands of that person alone. He has never read in magazine stories or newspaper articles anything about the section boss. He probably has never heard of him at all. No one has ever spoken of him as a factor in the public welfare or safety; he has never been apotheosized. Yet, without reducing one candle power the radiance of the engineer's glory it can be truthfully said that one section boss, in his relation to the traveling public, bears daily more responsibility than twenty engineers.

The engineer has but to follow the road. All this talk of heroism and firm-hand-on-the-throttle is chaff. There is no more heroism in running a locomotive than there is in manipulating the keys of a typewriter. The engineer does not set out on his run to face continuous danger. There are no unknown, masked or unheard-of pitfalls awaiting him. The people on the train are always in the same danger

that the engineer has to face. Nature seldom interposes obstructions, and when it does, the passengers are in greater peril than the engineer, because he sees the danger first and has a greater chance for saving himself. Run back over the disastrous wrecks of late years, and figure the percentage of engineers killed. When the dust of the impact of a collision clears away, the engineer is generally found limping around the pile. Sometimes of course, he is beneath it. The engineer has but to obey orders, attend to his trade by keeping his eyes on the gauges and indicators, and start and stop at the right time. He is responsible, jointly with the conductor, for the safety of one train for a few hours each day.

The section boss is responsible, solely, for every train that passes over his five to nine miles of track each hour of the twenty-four. There is no run to the division end, then rest and cessation of responsibility. It is a continuous strain; there is no respite.

The engineer follows the road.

The section boss makes it safe.

The general conception of a section boss is that of a blunt-headed person of limited intelligence, and this opinion, it must be regretfully admitted, is shared by many railroad men who occupy better paying and easier positions. As a plain matter of fact, the section boss must know almost as much about the operation of trains as a brakeman, conductor or engineer, in addition to his own trade. Trade it is, or rather, science. The book of rules of any railroad devotes less space to the section boss and the track department than to anything else, but the section boss is required to know the workings of more departments than his own.

He must learn his trade in the hard school of experience. It cannot be absorbed from books, and it is probably because the framers of books of rules are cognizant of this fact that they do not attempt to cover the duties of the section boss therein. Theory and diagrams will not put in a switch nor overcome the tendency of track to kick.

The section boss, although looked upon as ignorant and dense, must know the proper elevation to give a curve of certain degree; he must understand the scientific principle of easements, or run-offs, the gradual reduction of the elevation of a curve, which causes a car to regain its equilibrium after rounding it, and which forces the bevel of the wheel upon the short, or inside rail, upon approaching a curve; he must understand the expansion and contraction of metals to such degree that he may allow, with certainty, for the stretching in summer and the shortening in winter of the rails. Theory will not work in this. The practical knowledge of an Irish section foreman has been known to solve difficulties that stalled the entire engineering corps of a railroad.

But this is only a bare touch of what the section foreman must know. A little carelessness, a small mistake on his part in many of the tasks he daily performs, would mean perhaps the cost of a hundred human lives. The section boss must be infallible.

In addition to being the poorest paid man, for services rendered, in the employ of a railroad company, the section boss must bear the scorn of those in easier positions and of better pay, who imagine themselves his mental superiors, as well as their mistakes and faults in many cases. The ignorance or carelessness of many a student brakeman in running through a split switch without springs, bending the point in such a position as to leave it half open while the target shows clear, has been shouldered off upon the section boss by railroad managements time and again. "Faulty tracks," the newspapers say, quoting the general superintendent, general manager or general something, when an accident of this kind occurs. The management must blame somebody, if it cannot place the fault on Providence, and it must shield itself in its criminal practice of employing students for important positions of trust. Coroners' juries are always in doubt as to whether Providence or the section boss is to blame for faulty track, but no coroner's jury would hesitate a moment in fix-

ing the blame for a student brakeman's blunder if it could get at the facts.

Many a rear-end collision has occurred of late years on account of the student brakeman's improper flagging, or failure to flag at all. Imagine the feelings of a conductor working his way through a long passenger train, studying out the Chinese puzzles of through tickets, when he feels the emergency application. He knows there is a student brakeman in the rear Pullman car, his feet cocked up, taking his ease, but it is a question whether or not the brakeman will go back to flag against the passenger train following a few minutes behind.

If the train has stopped on a trestle, which often happens, the conductor may have seven or eight coaches, each from 75 to 80 feet long between him and the student. He must pass through the entire train, probably finding many of the doors locked, before he can reach the student and see that his train is properly protected. It may be but a matter of minutes,

but the speeding of those minutes has often resulted in a harvest of death.

On the other hand, who ever heard of the supposedly ignorant section foreman causing a wreck by failing to protect himself while raising track or changing the steel on a curve? There is not an instance in the history of railroading where a train was wrecked through the failure of a section foreman to properly flag when track was impassable. This is because the section foreman is required to be as well informed regarding the schedule of trains and the manner of flagging, as any conductor. More, his experience has told him what allowances to make for the stopping of certain trains on certain grades and levels. No one ever heard of an engineer running past a flagman stationed by a section boss.

That section foreman are not paid commensurate to the services they render, and the heavy and grave responsibilities they bear, is due to a lack of united effort to better their condition. A section foreman's education is a matter of years and, if they were properly

organized, they could win the recognition due them from the corporations they serve. This is especially true at this time, when the use of extremely heavy engines has become general, making the constant care and watchfulness of trained trackmen indispensable.

CHAPTER XVII.

MIKE MORRISSEY— STRAW.

Agnes May hummed a lively tune as she dried the dish-pan and held it up before her face. As the reflection beamed back she smiled, tucked a wayward strand of black hair behind her ear and turned her head to get the effect in profile, moving nearer the open door through which the full light of the long summer evening fell. Jack Ryan, seated on the top step, back against the door-casing, paper in hand and pipe in mouth, looked at her and smiled.

"Ah, Agnes, me de-ar," said he fervently, "ain't it a purthy pichture, now? Sure, they ain't th' loikes av it baychune Arge-tine an' Sawntay Fay."

Agnes May blushed, charged playfully at

him with the pan and tripped lightly across the kitchen to the table, heaped with a promiscuous assortment of platters, cups, and cooking utensils. Jack, taking advantage of the license due him in the section house social code, because of his position as extra-gang foreman, followed her and sat down near the fane of the kitchen goddess.

"Will yees allow me t' shmoke in yer prisence?" he asked. Agnes May nodded.

"Thin," said Jack, "loight a motch me de-ar an' hond it t' me wit' yer swate little hond." As the smoke blew out of the window and reached the nostrils of the jerries taking their ease beneath the trees in the yard, Eddy Conboy said:

"Jack do bay gittin' t'ick wit' Agnes May. Look at 'im now, shmokin' bay th' sthove loike a sthame ingen."

Mike Morrissy, straw boss of the surface gang, lost interest suddenly in the argument, concerning the length of time it would require to transport the pyramids of Egypt to Cairo on a push car, that had been under way with varying degrees of heat for half an hour.

"I left me tebacky in me west," he said. "I will go in for it."

"Here, mon," said Tom Quinn, offering his pouch.

"Sure, it have th' sweat av ye in it," Mike said. "I will fetch me own."

The straw boss might, under the rules established by Himself, enter the kitchen for a match. He must, however pass out as soon as his wants were supplied, and under no condition might he sit or stand talking therein. A jerry could not pass the bourne set by the lintel of the dining room door within and the third step without. Availing himself of his limited prerogative Mike noisily entered the kitchen, cramming the tobacco into his pipe, apparently heedless of the occupants of the room. Agnes May turned sharply.

"What d' y' want, Mike," she asked.

"Pardon me in-trusion," said Mike, "but would yees give a mon a motch?"

"You know where they air, git 'em yourself," she returned uncivilly.

Mike was a long time about it. When he

had lighted his pipe he walked slowly to the door, leaned his back against the jamb and comfortably folded his arms. The clatter of tongues that had reached his out under the trees was stilled. Agnes May worked noisily with the dishes, her head bent low over the pan, and Jack smoked in moody silence.

"Jack," said Mike, gazing reflectively at the cloud of smoke he had blown toward the kitchen ceiling, "can yees tell me if th' boite av a Christian is pizen?"

"Th' boite av a Christian!" said Herself, scornfully, as she loomed in unshed ease in the dining room door. "Th' boite av a Christian! Now go 'long wit' yees an' don't bay loafin' around th' kitchen."

Mike threw up his left guard and ducked when he heard her resinous voice, and retreated guiltily.

"Th' boite av a Christian, indade!" said Herself, looking after him. "What did th' mon mane?"

"He meant nothin' at all," answered Jack.

"He only wanted to git into an argymint. Sure, th' mon do bay jillis av me."

Herself turned to go back to the velour-covered lounge in the parlor, from which she had arisen to enforce the statutes of the official boarding house of section number three. A step past the dining room doorway she paused, faced about, and put her head around the casing. Smiling her benediction on Jack and Agnes May and shaking her head in ponderous approbation, she said:

"Ah, now, look at th' two av yees! Sure it's a foine pair ye'd make mar-rchin' down th' oyle together." Then she disappeared, scuffing her thick-skinned feet like sandpaper along the uncarpeted floor.

An unusual commotion was evident to Mike Morrissy in the regular gang as he watched them from the spot where his jerries were working nearly a quarter of a mile down the track. He thought someone must have been hurt. Presently the men went back to their claw bars, spike mauls and tamping picks and Mike saw Jack pacing up and down the mid-

dle of the track in his characteristic watchful attitude, body inclined slightly forward and hands behind his back.

"It was n't him," said 'Mike. 'Sure I thought a spoikin' maul had flew aff th' handle an' knocked th' head av him. It would bay a gr-reat pity if it had!"

Mike walked beside Tom Quinn that evening as they tramped up the passing track to the section house after housing the hand cars and tools. Tom was vibrating with excitement.

"Mon aloive," he said; "Jack is th' looky bye." He looked slantingly across his long nose at Mike to study the effect of his broad hint for an eager inquiry. Mike was looking at the ground.

"He do bay th' lookiest mon aloive," said Tom, with mysterious reserve. Mike kicked the head of a broken bolt. "Is thot so?" he asked, listlessly.

"It is," said Tom. "Sure, mon, he picked up th' wort' av his six mont's pay baysoide th' thrack this mornin'."

"Oh, git out wit' you," said Mike, incredulously.

"He did thot," insisted Tom. "Sure he found a goold r-ring wit' a daymond r-rack in th' soide av it th' soize av me toom."

"Is thot so!" gasped Mike.

"It is," said Tom, decisively. "He is a rich mon from this day."

"Sure, mon," Mike said, "It moight bay bross."

"Bross not'in'," contended Tom with asperity, "it's forty-foive collibre goold."

Jack, Herself and Agnes May, were the center of a group near the kitchen door when Mike entered the yard and placed his pail on the end of the wash-bench. Agnes May's face was lit with an inner gleam of pride and happiness and Herself's countenance would have served as a switch lamp. Jack, admired, complimented and envied, stood beside Agnes May swelling his chest. He took the ring from Herself's great, spongy hand and raised Agnes May's more bony member, tenderly.

"Me de-ar," said he, "foine as it is it's

none too foine for yer purthy little finger," and over the finger, as dainty and shapely as a cucumber, he slipped the band, with some difficulty at the second joint, and a sunbeam falling through the cottonwood trees around the section house struck the big setting. It flashed insolently, triumphantly, in Mike Morrissey's eyes as he craned his neck forward, looking at the ring. He laughed.

"Sure, I t'ink it's boss," he said.

"Boss not'in'," said Jack, "it's solid goold an' th' set is a daymond rack."

Mike lifted his shoulders and sniffed. "Sure," said he, "if ye're sartin' it's goold putt th' awcid on it."

Instantly there was a division among the jerries. Up to that moment they had stood as one man to defend the fineness of the ring. But if there was any room for a reasonable doubt Mike's suggestion could not be waived. The acid would tell.

"Awcid not'in'," said Jack, scornfully. "I will not. Sure, it's goold an' that's all there is about it."

"I t'ink it is boss wit a loomp av salt pather in th' soide av it," said Mike.

"Aw go 'long wit' ye, Mike," scoffed Herself; "ye're jillis av Jack, so ye bay."

"Yis," asserted Jack, "he is that, an' if it wasn't for Dave Hoolihan that putt 'im where he is, I'd fire 'im at wanst, th' owld ratttle shnake!"

Mike tucked up his sleeves and filled a basin with water, conveying by that proceeding the understanding that he considered the incident closed. As he rubbed the soap over his face he mumbled: "It's boss. De-savin' a young girrul wit' an owld boss r-ring."

The breach between the two factions became wider when the jerries sat down to talk it over. Jack's refusal to submit the ring to the acid test was taken as conclusive evidence by Mike's supporters that it was a worthless trinket. Jack's friends said it was a cowardly reflection on the honor of an honest man. Personal encounters were avoided only by the intervention of Herself. Jack and Mike kept out of the quarrel, the former by staying in

the kitchen with Agnes May, and the latter by walking down the track with his pipe. The jerries carried the dispute to bed with them, and Herself was called upon even after all had retired to prevent bloodshed between Jim Sullivan and Owen Dugan, an engagement having been precipitated by Owen hurling his shoe at Jim while the latter was saying his prayers. By the end of the week the contention had grown to the proportions of a feud. In the yard where the jerries spent their evenings the benches were grouped under separate trees, and the chilly wind of unfriendliness swept the wide space between.

Mike went to the city on Sunday. In the evening he returned, moody and downcast. Jack was off guard in the kitchen, where Agnes May was "boiling" supper. Mike sighed heavily as he filled his vest pocket with matches.

Agnes May was in high spirits over the prospect of the Fourth of July celebration she intended to grace with her presence in Argentine the following day. The irradiant glow of

the coming festivities softened the angles of her temper.

"Air you tired, Mike?" she asked.

"An' I do bay thot," he replied.

"Well, set down there by the winder an' rest," said she.

Mike crossed his legs and watched her as she moved rapidly about the kitchen. "I wor lookin' at some r-rings in the windy av a jew-elary sthore in Arge'tine t'-day," he said, "but I didn't see none that compared t' th' wan Jack made a prisint t' ye."

Agnes May lifted the hand upon which she wore the jewel and looked at it proudly. "It 's a beaut, ain't it?" said she.

"It is thot," Mike replied, "but"—he leaned forward, looked cautiously around and lowered his voice to a rasping whisper—"what if it wor brass in unther th' goold!"

Agnes May flushed. "It ain't brass," she said. "Soap suds don't turn it."

"But the awcid moight," the tempter urged. "Ye know Jack was feared t' thry th' awcid."

"Well I ain't," said Agnes May, confidently; "fetch on your old acid!"

Again Mike projected a searching glance around the room as he drew a small bottle from his pocket. "I have some here," he said, "thot I got t' thry a watch a Shaney mon wanted t' sell me in Arge'tine t'-day." He poured the colorless contents of the phial into a teacup and Agnes May, with unbounded faith in Jack, dropped into it the ring. Both bent their heads over the cup and peered into it like sorcerers studying an omen of tea grounds.

"It's a toornin' black," said Mike, triumphantly, tilting and turning the cup from side to side. "It's a chate an' a hoomboog!"

Agnes May snatched the ring from the strong acid, but the lustre of gold was gone from it, and the mirror-backed glass setting glistened in a band of tarnished brass. She looked at the discolored trinket as it rested in her palm like a bright dream with an ending among tombs and tears, then she threw

it down, covered her head with her apron and sobbed.

Mike picked up the ring and placed his hand on her shoulder. "Don't ye moind it," he coaxed; "don't ye wape about th' owld t'ing at all. Sure, Jack niver found it, me de-ar. He bought it in Arge'tine for sivent-y-foive cents. Didn't I see a tatie bag th' full av thim t'-day?"

Finally the apron came down and Agnes May, red-eyed and sorrowful of countenance, tried the potatoes and prepared to draw the water from the big pot.

"Wait a bit, me de-ar," said Mike, beckoning her to him.

Sniffing occasionally and applying the corners of her apron to her eyes, she stood beside him while he removed the lid of a tiny box which he produced with a great show of mystery. She gave vent to a little gasp of admiration when she saw the ring that nestled in the cushions of pink cotton. Mike took the ring and placed it in the cup of acid.

Agnes May winced.

"You'll ruin it," she said.

Mike smiled. Down in the bottom of the cup the ring glistened in defiance of the acid's corrosive touch. After a while Mike took it from the crucial bath and placed it in his palm beside Jack's present.

"There ye see th' two av thim, Agnes May," said he; "they are loike th' two harrts av us—Jack and me." Over the finger where Jack's ring lately had twinkled he laboriously worked the new one, just as Jack, whistling lightheartedly, entered from the dining room. Agnes May seized the blackened trinket and threw it at his feet.

"There's your old brass ring," she said.

Herself sat on the front steps that night, resting easily with her fat chin in her hands. The moonlight twinkled through the leaves and the safety valve of the freight engine on the siding hissed its disapproval of the amphibian chorus in the creek behind the depot. Mike came around the corner of the house and stood before Herself.

"It's a foine avenin', Missus Meehan," he said.

"Sure," asserted Herself.

Missus Meehan," said Mike irrelevantly, "how would yees loike me for a son-in-law?"

Herself threw up her head and laughed. "Git out wit' ye now," she said. "Go 'long wit' ye, mon, what 'd ye mane?"

"I mane," said he, placing his mouth close to her ear and whispering, "will yees consint t' me marryin' av Agnes May?"

"Oh git out wit' you mon!" said Herself. "D'ye t'ink I' bay afther marryin' th' loikes av Aggie May t' a mon that's bossin' sthraw boss over a gang of jerries?" Herself cushioned her chin luxuriously in her palms again and Mike disappeared around the corner of the house, walking dejectedly, his head bent forward on his breast.

Herself served breakfast on Sundays and holidays at 7 instead of 6 o'clock, so it happened that the jerries were asleep when Mike Morrissy and John Brawley went down stairs, followed presently by Agnes May, at 5:30 on

the Fourth of July morning. Mike and Brawley went to the tool house and ran one of the hand cars out upon the siding. Slowly they pumped toward the western end of the track to the point where it joined the main line, almost in front of the section house. Agnes May, dressed in the outfit Missus Gallagher made for her to wear to the picnic, stood on the head-block, well up out of the cinders and dust, awaiting them.

Down the line the whistle of the 5:45 passenger from the west sounded. Mike and John stopped the car to wait until she passed. The engine shot by with the fireman standing in the cab doorway scanning the windows for a glimpse of Agnes May, at whom he had been waving since the early spring-time, when he could scarcely see her through the timid dawn. After he had passed he saw her, holding her skirts with one hand and her hat with the other, her back toward the direction from which the train came, like a good railroader, to keep the cinders out of her eyes. He waved his handkerchief, endangering his

life to lean out and make sure she would see him, flattering himself with the thought that she had put her finery on for his sake. Agnes was looking, but his frantic signals passed unanswered.

The 5:45 train was Jack Ryan's alarm clock. He awoke regularly every morning when it passed. He slept in a front room, and the last thing his eyes rested upon before he retired, and the first thing they sought in the morning when he arose, was the tool house down the passing track. It was his shrine. In it were locked the track jacks, levers and bars with which he hoped to ultimately lift himself into the division superintendent's place and make a lady of Agnes May. Thus Agnes May became inseparably linked in his thoughts with the tool house and the division superintendent, and he was thinking of her when he saw her boarding Mike Morrissy's handcar almost beneath his window. Before he could make out what it meant, John Brawley had given the car a shove and leaped aboard and,

with Agnes May bending to the lever at Mike's side, they had set off toward Argentine.

Jack put his head out of the window and looked after them. Then he pounded on the wall that partitioned him from Hersel's boudoir and shouted:

"They 're alop'in' wit' th' han' khar. They 're a roonin' away t' Argentine t' git marrud!"

Herself flopped out of bed with a suddenness that bewildered her and confronted the wall that had thrown its burden of evil tidings into the current of her dreams.

"Who 's a roonin' away wit' th' han' kyar," she cried, beating the wall with her fists; "who 's afther gittin' marrud at Arge'tine?"

Jack leaned out of his window and shouted toward the open sash of Hersel's room not six feet away: "Agnes May an' Mike Morrissey, th' sthraw!"

The plaster trembled beneath Hersel's vigorous assault on the wall, and the crayon portrait of the dead-and-gone Meehan sagged on its nail and swerved from the perpendicu-

lar, much after the manner of the original in his hilarious progression through this vale of temptations. When she heard Jack's voice the wrack of sleep cleared from her brain and she dropped to her knees like a pile driver hammer before the window. Far down the track she saw the handcar and Agnes May's white dress.

"She's roonin' away t' marry up wit' Mike," said Jack, shaking his fist after them.

"She will bay disgraced forever!" wailed Herself. "I would bay happier this minute if she had doyed whin she swallied th' bookle ev her poor dead-an'-gone fayther's overshoe twenty years ago come th' last Choosd'y in Novimber!"

"If I'd a goon or ray-volver," said Jack, shaking his head solemnly, "sure I'd bay a murderer this day."

"Can't we sthop thim," said Herself; "can't we tilligraff th' po-layce?"

"Th' polayce," said Jack, "has no power t' arrist a mon unless he's dhroonk. No mon can

bay arristed for marryin', unless he marrus another mon's woife."

"Oh, what can bay done," moaned Herself as the handcar disappeared around a curve a mile to the eastward. "Me har-rt is breakin' wit' shame an' disgrace!"

Jack's gaze drifted to the tool house. The sight of it awakened memories of dreams he had stored away for Agnes May to share. And Agnes May was running away to become the wife of an ordinary straw. "We will folly thim an' prewint it!" he cried.

"We will folly thim," seconded Herself, arising and taking her wine-colored silk from its hook in the closet. The jerries, aroused by the commotion, were swarming in the hall before Jack's door. He appeared half dressed and sent Owen Dugan and four others after the remaining handcar. Ten minutes later Herself passed down the stairs fastening the hooks in the front of her waist and holding two hat-pins crosswise in her mouth. Jack clattered after her.

"Now, me bullies," said he as they hastily

boarded the car, "land us in Arge'tine in thirty minutes."

Argentine was twelve miles distant and the handcar was built to run, at its best, no faster than twenty miles an hour, but the jerries crowded it a little, with Herself and Jack standing between the levers. Every time the jerries struck a curve they were invigorated to renewed effort by the hope of seeing the run-aways on the straight track beyond. They reasoned there would be some entertainment when Jack should meet Mike. But their labors were in vain. When they reached Argentine they found Mike Morrissy's handcar standing beside the depot with a padlock-secured chain threaded through its driving wheel.

Jack sought information from the agent. The agent said people desiring to marry generally headed for the county recorder's office to secure a license, without which the ceremony could not take place. At the court house a policeman told them all public offices were closed, it being a holiday.

Jack looked at Herself. "They can't git a loysence," said he, "so they can't git mar-rud t'-day."

"Thank God!" sighed Herself, fervently. The policeman laughed.

"They can git a license, all right," said he.

"Where?" demanded Jack.

"They can go to the recorder's house and git it," the officer answered.

"We have been wastin' toime gabbin' wit' this felly," said Herself. "We must go to the raycoorder's house an' prewint it."

Jack, in the extravagance of desperation, engaged a hack for the last stage of the race. The recorder was sitting on his porch smoking, his books on a chair beside him, having learned by experience that it would be a profitable day. At the foot of the steps Herself stopped to fasten the bottom hooks of her waist, which she had overlooked in the excitement at home. Jack sprang forward.

"Air ye th' raycoorder?" he asked.

The official put his pipe aside, took up his pen, opened his license book and nodded.

"You 'll have to bring the lady up," he said; "you can 't get a license without her."

"Did yees loysince t' wid in th' ho-oly bounds av mathrimony this mornin' Mike Morrissey an' Agnes May Meehan?" asked Jack, severely.

The recorder smiled. "I did," he answered. "They were the last couple before you."

Mike, Agnes May and John Brawley arrived home at 5 o'clock. After receiving the jerries' congratulations Agnes May went into the kitchen to prepare supper for them.

"It was silly of ma to foller us," she said, "an' the dickens 'll be to pay when she gits home."

"N-iver ye moind, me de-ar," said Mike, "we bet thim out."

Jack and Herself, their chariot propelled by two of the five jerries who left home with them, the others, according to Jack's interpretation of the power vested in the police, having given the authorities of Argentine ample cause for depriving them of their lib-

erty, made the haven of the passing track at 6:15, just ahead of the plug.

"We will mate thim," said Mike, "at th' front dure an' intherjuce oursilves as mon an' woife."

Agnes May ran to the kitchen mirror to adjust her hair. Her nervous fingers bungled so Herself and Jack were in the front hall when she and Mike went forward. They met at the dining room door.

Jack removed his hat. "Misther Morrissey," said he, stepping back and bowing grandly with his hand upon his heart; "Misther Morrissy, lave me intherjuce an' pre-sint t' ye me woife, Missus Ryan."

"Missus Ryan!" gasped Agnes May.

"Missus Ryan," said Mike.

"Missus Ryan, indade," said Jack. "We wor marrud in Arge'tine t'day."

"May yees bay happy," said Mike, "an' live a t'ousand years, th' bot' av yees."

Herself ran her hand down the row of hooks in the bosom of her waist and smiled. Jack bowed again, then reached out and laid

his hand on Agnes May's head. "Me blessin' on ye, me dochter," he said.

"Ye air bet, Mike, me lad," said Eddy Conboy, "ye air bet clane out. In th' family ye'll bay not 'in' but a sthraw boss all th' days av yer loife."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PENSION SYSTEM.

To the public, which sees only such reports as the railway corporations permit to leak through their sieves into the newspapers, the system of pensioning employees is a great and commendable philanthropy. It is, apparently, an arrangement whereby disabled and old employees are enabled to spend their declining days without worry, contentedly smoking their pipes and living at the generous corporations' expense. To the railroad man, the bearer of the master's burden, it is a distasteful and unjust arrangement whereby the employees are forced to shoulder the liabilities of the employer; as a form of compulsory insurance that does not insure, and which is more expensive than any accident or life insurance in the world; a system under which men are

bought and sold at prices far below those of the days of chattel slavery in the South; a system under which a man is not reckoned with as a creature made in the image of his Creator, nor according to his value to society, but by the standard of economic value to his employer.

Many of the great railway companies of the United States have adopted the pension system, so many, in fact, that it has grown to be regarded as an institution, a part of the plan of operation of all the big roads. Those that have not as yet succeeded in forcing it upon their employees are devising schemes for, so doing, sugar coating the pill, or boldly serving notice that it will be put into effect at a certain future date. The pension system is called "relief department" by some roads, and it works differently on different lines, but primarily it is alike everywhere, it being a scheme, like the hospital assessment, to get something for nothing.

Railway corporations will maintain, do maintain, in fact, and point to the regulations

governing such department, that no employee is forced to become a member of the pension, or relief system. The same contention is made in regard to the hospital assessment, but every man who has railroaded, from the section man up, knows that he must agree, in writing, or verbally with the company's agent as represented in the foreman, that he will pay the assessment without question. While the railways may not look upon it as compulsory, the fact remains that every employee of a company enforcing the pension system must contribute to both the hospital and relief, or pension departments, whether it is to his liking or not. And it is also a fact that each employee, from the most obscure, is given an application for membership form, to fill out and sign, by the foreman of the department under which he goes to work. This may not be compulsory, but a man's period of service would abruptly terminate upon his refusal to comply.

The pension system was not inaugurated as a relief measure for the employees of the

railways, but it is the practice of a deep and cunning scheme originated by some lawyer, and its sole purpose is to reduce the liability of corporations toward their employees. Under it employees are forced to relieve the company of damages, which they could, under law, recover in countless cases. It is a scheme of capital to make charity, sadly abused and grotesquely disguised, cover its multitudinous sins. The following, quoted word for word, from the compact into which the employee enters with the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad, is the keynote of the pension system, no matter upon what railroad it may be found:

"I also agree, that, in consideration of the amounts paid, and to be paid by said company for the maintenance of said relief department, and of the guarantee by said company of the payment of said benefits, the acceptance by me of benefits for injury shall operate as a release and satisfaction of all claims against said company, and all other companies associated therewith in the administration of their

relief departments, for damages arising from or growing out of said injury; and further, in the event of my death no part of said death benefit or unpaid disability benefit shall be due or payable unless and until good and sufficient releases shall be delivered to the superintendent of said relief department, of all claims against said relief department, as well as against said company, and all other companies associated therewith, as aforesaid, arising from or growing out of my death, such releases having been duly executed by all who might legally assert such claims; and further, if any suit shall be brought against said company, or any other company associated therewith, as aforesaid, for damages arising from or growing out of injury or death, occurring to me, the benefits otherwise payable, and all obligations of said relief department and said company, created by my membership in said relief fund, shall be forfeited without any declaration or other act by said relief department or said company."

Members of the relief department are di-

vided into five classes, according to salary, as follows:

Less than \$35.00 a month, first class.

\$35.00 or more, but less than \$55.00, second class.

\$55.00 or more, but less than \$75.00, third class.

\$75.00 or more, but less than \$95.00, fourth class.

\$95.00 or more, fifth class.

Monthly assessments, politely called "contributions," are: first class, 75 cents; second class, \$1.50; third, \$2.25; fourth, \$3.00; fifth, \$3.75.

A man in the service of the company loses his life through some accident. He has paid for his insurance, probably one year, probably thirty years; he has yielded the monthly assessment, believing that he has protected and provided for his family in so doing. But, before this unique insurance company will pay to the widow one cent of the money due her in law and in justice, she must comply with the "regulations." The regulations provide that death

benefits will be paid in this order: "To the beneficiary of a member of the first class, \$250; second class, \$500; third class, \$750; fourth class, \$1,000; fifth class, \$1,250." And these miserable equivalents of human lives, according to railway standards, will be paid only upon the beneficiary signing a release "in full of all claims or demands of whatsoever nature against the department or the company."

The bowed and labor-racked widow of the section man is told that the life of a laborer is valued at but \$250, no more. That she may take or refuse, as she wills it, but if she accepts the money she must sign a document which is an indorsement of the standard of value the greedy corporation has set upon a toiler's life. The widow or children of an overworked clerk or brakeman may accept full value for husband or father by receipting for \$750, and a switchman or conductor's family is told the dead man was worth but \$1,000 in the labor markets of the world.

When a beneficiary complies with the de-

grading terms of the payment of a policy, the munificent corporation grudgingly inserts its flabby hand, red with the blood of a thousand hearts, into the coffers of the pension fund, the fund to which the dead man contributed all the heavy years he served, from 75 cents to \$3.75 a month, and hands the widow **HER OWN MONEY**, while the world applauds the generosity and fatherly care of the corporation.

So it is seen that the victims of this pernicious system not only bear the entire burden of disability and death benefits themselves, but pile up a vast fund out of which the corporation protects itself against lawful claims for damages.

"No matter," says the corporation's lawyers to the widow of the dead man, "what our liability may be, or how grave and plain our contributory negligence in causing the death of your husband, you must sign away your claims, your lawful claims, for damages against us before we will pay you the money he entrusted to our keeping for this contingency."

Some railways do not carry the pension system so far as a life insurance scheme, merely allowing it to rest with retirement from service with a monthly stipend. But, no matter where the scheme may end, and no matter what its scope and provisions, the company behind it has a "cinch." The Delaware, Lackawanna & Western has a pension system, the "regulations" of which read like the scenario of a comic opera. It has been in effect since June, 1902, and, while it has the redeeming feature of no assessment upon employees for its maintenance, it is so judiciously guarded that not one employee in one thousand will ever be benefitted by it.

The following, quoted from the Lackawanna's book of regulations, explains the question of eligibility:

"(a) All employees engaged in any capacity in the operation of the railroad proper who have attained the age of seventy years shall be retired, and if they have been twenty-five years in the service, shall be pensioned; provided, however, that this clause shall not

be mandatory in its application to executive officers appointed by the Board of Managers.

“(b) All employees sixty to sixty-nine years of age, both inclusive, who have been twenty-five or more years in the service, and who have become incapacitated, may be retired and pensioned.

“In computing service it shall be reckoned from the date since which the person has been continuously in the service to the date when retired. Leave of absence, suspension, dismissal, followed by reinstatement within one year, or temporary lay-off on account of reduction of force when unattended by other employment, is not to be considered as a break in the continuity of service. Persons who leave the service thereby relinquish all claims to the benefits of pension allowances.

“Pension allowances shall be paid monthly until the death of the beneficiary; provided, however, that the Company may withhold its stipends in all cases of GROSS MISCONDUCT.”

The stress on the words “gross miscon-

duct," was not placed by the pension board of Lackawanna system. The question is, what is to be interpreted as "gross misconduct"?

A seventy-year-old pensioner of the Lackawanna system might administer corporal chastisement to his wife every morning that the coffee failed to meet his standard of requirement; he might look upon red wine, and err thereby; he might transgress all the limitations of the moral code and still not stumble across the dead-line of gross misconduct marked by the Lackawanna road. But, an old engineer, who might refuse to take out an engine in time of strike, might be adjudged—who knows, save the Lackawanna company—guilty of "gross misconduct," and his pension might be forthwith discontinued.

In addition to the plain and unquestionable disregard of law in the matter of pension schemes, to maintain which the employees of a railroad are assessed arbitrarily and forced to sign away their individual rights, as well as the rights of their heirs, they make it impossible for the employees to protect themselves

through membership in fraternal societies and by old line insurance. The money that a workingman could spare for dues in a fraternal insurance order, or for the payment of the premium on old line insurance, must go to the railroad's pension, its self-protection, fund. For the yearly amount paid by an employee of a relief department, self-protected railway, he could pay for legitimate insurance, that would protect him in case of accident, or his family in case of death, of far greater amount than the tentative provisions of the railroad's insurance department guarantee.

CHAPTER XIX.

SWITCHING AT OAKLAND.

I entered the service of the Southern Pacific at Oakland as switchman in the night yard August 13, 1899. The main yard was subdivided into five parts, namely Peralta Street, Homestead, Slip, Coachyard, and the Mole. Each of these subdivisions was taken care of by a designated switch engine and crew, called after their working stations. The regular engines were also assisted by tramp, or "bum" engines (extra engines) which had no regular place to work, but performed whatever duties were assigned to them with orders to report at office when finished.

The Mole engine attended exclusively to passenger duties at Oakland Pier. The passenger yard engine made up the several passenger trains in station order at Oakland. Some

of these had only to be reversed, in others some of the cars had to be turned on a Y so as to bring observation end to rear, putting on the finishing touch by throwing out "a bad order" and substituting another in its place. Then, when the trains were prepared they were shoved to the Mole where they were "spotted" ready to receive from the great ferries, operated between Oakland and San Francisco by the Southern Pacific, their loads of human freight for all points, not only in the United States but in the world.

I must say in connection with this far western railway that its facilities for handling the vast multitudes that arrive and depart at Oakland terminal, where over 200 scheduled passenger trains are handled in twenty-four hours, cannot be surpassed by any other of a similar character in the world, as accidents embracing loss of life are unknown.

The slip engine loaded the two big boats that transfer cars across the bay, and made up into station order all cars arriving from San Francisco, leaving openings here and

there for cars that were to come later on. When the last boat load arrived the cars were placed in order in their respective trains in as lively a manner as possible, and taken to Peralta street, where they were sandwiched in with other cars that had been previously station ordered by the Peralta street switching crew.

The Peralta street engine handles all cars brought in by tramp and cannon ball switch engines from local points around Oakland, as well as those delivered by other engines from various points in the yard, and switches them in the following order: long loads behind, short loads ahead, and so lined up that when the final move is made they are ready to be sandwiched in for their transcontinental trip. The cabooses, or way cars, are first thrown out, and on top of these the Peralta street engine lets go her long loads. Then the Slip engine lets go a bunch, and so on until two or three forty-five or fifty car trains are lined up in perfect station order; New Orleans in the south, Ogden in the east, and Portland in the north.

In two hours after the freight sheds have ceased to work the through trains are on their respective routes across the continent. To the uninitiated it is a novel sight to watch this ceaseless pounding, chugging and pulling, the hurry and the bustle, especially in the fore part of the evening, as this is the time when all through fast freights leave their originating points. This is only natural, as all freight is delivered and handled through the day time.

The sheds are no sooner relieved of their loads than they are filled up with empties, which are spotted at designated places to receive the load that leaves the next night, and so on in an endless routine. During the time that Peralta street and Slip crews are industriously hammering and pounding their respective cars into station order, the Homestead crew, which has previously received orders from the assistant yardmaster as to what track he intends to build the different trains on, have thrown out the cabooses for the respective runs on the rear end of these tracks. This engine attends to the breaking up of all trains

that arrive in the yard, switching out the long loads and cutting them in ahead of the cabooses, passing all other loads down to Peralta street to be handled by the crew in the manner already described. Cars for San Francisco are thrown on tracks which lead from the Homestead to slip yard and from part of a Y. The fast freight, which consists of sea-board, stock, fruit and perishables of all kinds, is segregated and kept on one branch of the Y, while the dead freight is kept on the other branch, thus enabling the foreman of the Slip engine to conveniently fill out with dead freight when there is not enough fast freight for that purpose.

It was while I was working on the Peralta street engine that an event occurred which will be long remembered by those who took an active part in it. A transfer shed was situated close to Peralta street. At the platform of this shed cars from outlying districts were placed for the purpose of having the freight consolidated into car load lots. Here also the powder from the different powder

mills between Oakland and Port Costa was transferred. It was shortly after a transfer of this kind had been made one night, the car doors being closed and sealed, and the shed foreman preparing his switch list, that a fire broke out. The fire was supposed to have originated from the spark of an engine falling on a trail made by the transferring of some empty nitrate sacks, which had been dragged along the platform while being trucked from one car to another. When the fire was discovered the entire platform was a mass of flames. Immediately the flames shot up in the darkness of the night, all work suspended and a general rush was made for the sheds.

The Peralta street engine, with which I was working, was the first to arrive. We made haste to couple up the cars and, if possible, pull them out of the fire, our haste in this direction being spurred by the rapidly fleeing shed-men who were running like mad to the tide flats and yelling at the top of their voices alternately, "Fire,"—"Powder,"—and, "Run

for your lives!" Under ordinary conditions the undertaking would have been extremely hazardous, as a strong wind was blowing across the bay, which carried the flames in tongues between the cars as we slacked ahead and back to make the couplings, but the thought of powder stretched the line of endurance to the full limit, especially for me, as only a few years before I had witnessed an explosion of powder cars in a fire at Butte, Montana, which blotted out the entire fire department and broke all of the windows for miles around.

We finally succeeded in making all of the couplings and started to pull out. The sides of the cars next to the platform were in flames, and the fire was beginning to crawl over the roofs. As the five rear cars came out of the dense smoke we saw that they were all marked in the large black letters employed for that purpose "Powder—Powder." When pulling out of the transfer track the rear car broke off. It was immediately taken care of by the Slip engine, in charge of Eustace Alvers, commonly known as "Kid" Alvers, who, with his crew was successful in quenching the flames.

The other engines and crews made a streak for it, adding to the confusion by their calls of warning, and the whistles screeching back-up signals at every turn of their wheels, in their efforts to warn others and reach a place of safety themselves when they heard the cry of "powder." This left the Peralta street engine and only two of her crew, myself and one O'Neil, to fight the flames on the four remaining powder cars. We at once ran the blazing cars to the water tank and O'Neil climbed up and kept a steady pull on the rope as we shoved the cars back and forth in front of the spout. While we succeeded in getting a good stream on the side of the cars, we could not reach the roofs with the water, because of the fact that the engine spout was too high.

Seeing that the other crews had deserted, we finally came to a conclusion to take to our heels and make a run for safety. After crossing a few of the tracks in the direction of the city, we saw reflected against the dark background in the light of the blaze, hundreds of people, young and old, standing in rows on

the tops of box cars, watching the fire. This made us change our minds, as we realized that if that powder exploded it would kill a great many of these spectators, among whom perhaps were our own families and friends. After a short consultation, and a determined battle against the fear that pulled us away from the danger, we returned, and were reinforced by a yard pilot named Henry. O'Neil and Henry mounted the tops of the burning cars, while I was assigned to the post of passing signals to the engineer.

In moving back and forth another car broke off. This was afterwards extinguished by the Oakland fire department. We were now left with three cars, and O'Neil remarked to me that we had done all we could do with the sides, and that some different action would have to be taken immediately to put out the fire on the roofs, as he could now read through the warping tin that lined the inside, the names of the different kinds of powder marked on the boxes. We then decided to pull the cars ahead to a small hydrant situated near

the main switch at Peralta street. The doors could not be opened at all on the side that had been exposed to the fire on the freight shed platform, as the irons had been warped and twisted out of shape. We were, however, successful in opening them on the opposite side. It was while performing this operation that we thought we were confronted with the greatest danger, as we were expecting that the draft created by shoving open the doors would give a greater impetus to the flames, which were now on the inside of the roofs, and the sparks were falling in a shower all over the powder boxes.

We finally succeeded in extinguishing the fire, and when the danger was past the crews commenced to gather in from their respective hiding places, offering their suggestions as to what should have been done. And the yardmasters, who had vanished with the rest and returned when they considered it safe, gave the report of the incident to the officials as follows: That one yard pilot, one yard clerk, one watchman, five yard foremen, thirteen

yardmen, five enginemen and five firemen, faced the danger and overcame the flames, and recommended that they be commended for their courageous work. Later on, these yardmasters tried to get rid of the men who made the greatest effort, and who, if they had not been successful, would not have been alive to-day to tell the tale.

Those who were entitled to the real credit were: one foreman (Eustace Alvers) and three helpers on Slip engine, two helpers on Peralta street engine, one yard pilot, two firemen and two engineers. The Peralta street engine foreman was absent, and one helper fled to a safe distance, leaving the two helpers of that engine with the aid of Henry, the yard pilot, to fight the conflagration in three cars of power as best they could. The engineer and firemen on the Peralta street engine had twenty or twenty-five cars between them and the powder and did not know that they were handling anything of an explosive nature, so that really there were only three men who faced directly the awful menace of death,

fully understanding their risk. The three cars were so badly burned that, when their loads were transferred, they collapsed.

The following is an exact copy of the reward we received for risking our lives:

"One yard pilot, one yard clerk, one watchman, five yard foremen, thirteen yardmen, five enginemen, and five firemen (no names mentioned) have been commended on the record for their energy and courage displayed in extinguishing fire which was destroying company property, the work being attended with great risk on account of some of the cars being loaded with gunpowder and dynamite. It is a pleasure to note such loyalty on the part of employees of the company."

After this there arose a dissension, brought about for the purpose of getting rid of those who actually performed the greatest service to the company. It is presumed this was done by the yardmaster to get rid, if possible, of those men before the company received an authentic account of the risk they took in the saving of lives and property, and as such re-

ceive the reward they were justly entitled to, but from which they were defrauded by the falsifying reports of their immediate superiors. When a reduction of force made it essential to lay men off, the men who took the above risks, whose records were clear and whose seniority should have given them preference, were the first to be suspended. It was also made to appear to the superintendent that they were agitators or dynamiters. But the evil intentions of the yardmasters were frustrated by the efforts of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, in laying before Superintendent Agler a correct statement of the situation.

The seeds of dissention, once sown, are not very easily plucked out, as I subsequently discovered, and the petty official tyrant remains the same until he runs his limit. Shortly afterward I was given charge of the different engines when vacancies occurred, or when a foreman laid off. As I was one of the youngest men in the yard I presumed it was for the purpose of finding an opportunity that

would cause my dismissal, and I performed my duties to the best of my ability. I was finally sent up to take a conductor's examination for the purpose of handling cannon-ball engines when called on. In this I was successful, and now that I had accomplished my purpose in outlasting and defying the jealous spite of my enemies, and having previously been assured of work at San Francisco by Fred Salter, general yardmaster at that point, I resigned. I had to undergo a new medical examination, as well as to secure two tin-type photographs to be used in the rogues' gallery in event of dismissal for cause, insubordination or strike.

I resigned from Oakland August 15, 1900, and had photos taken and passed physical examination August 16. On August 17, 1900, I commenced work in Frisco.

CHAPTER XX.

ALLOW ME TO PROTEST.

At this point I wish to enter another protest against this pernicious system of inquisition and ostracism, as represented by unreasonable physical examination and unjust standards of age limit. It matters not whether it be an old engineer, fireman, conductor, brakeman, or switchman, whose hair has grown gray in the service of a company, he is made to realize that the gray forelock which hangs over his forehead, instead of being a token commanding respect, is a sign of slavery.

And not only the transportation employees, but those who come under the age limit in other departments of the service. They go blindly on, feeling and knowing that it is unjust, but failing of a remedy, because each de-

partment has formed an aristocratic notion that it is the only department essential to the working of a railroad, and that all others are mere appendages, more for ornament than use. They refuse, in consequence, to federate or work in harmony for the common welfare, and in so doing they are garroting each other in the interests of their masters. By united action they could throw off this heavy and degrading yoke.

A review of significant events that have transpired in the past few years ought to be sufficient warning to all concerned. The youth is rapidly filling all positions of responsibility and trust, while men with years of practical experience and ability who are over the "standard age" or under the "standard physical examination" are forced upon the world in idleness without a place to lay their heads. All of these conditions could be changed if those upon whom the burdens fall could only be brought to take united or concerted action in their days of youthful prosperity, instead of shunning their fellow-workers, who in many

instances are considered unworthy of notice because they fill less responsible positions.

Would not Abraham Lincoln have shuddered at the thought, after bending his energies to raise the black man from slavery, that the day would come when the descendants of those who fought for the abolition of chattel slavery, would bend their knees in humble submission to the whims of capitalism and become industrial slaves themselves? Would not the wraith of Washington rise to point the finger of scorn at the descendants of the patriots who gave their blood on many a terrible battle field rather than submit to the degrading conditions which the English parliament persisted in forcing upon them, for allowing themselves to drift into more abject conditions than existed in those days, because each considers himself a 5 per cent more important slave than the other slave in the employ of the money power?

From the east flashes the disgrace to American manhood of Homestead, where Carnegie and his Pinkerton thugs slaughtered

those who asserted their independence in claiming that which rightfully belonged to them; in the west is the lurid stain of the bull pens of Idaho and Colorado, where the constitution has been set at naught and the freedom of speech and the press has been strangled; from Ann Arbor comes the news to the engineers of the loss of their strike through government by injunction, and from Kansas City we hear of an attempt to throttle freedom of speech by the incarceration of a machinist in jail for endeavoring to show a strike breaker the errors of his ways. From all over this broad land of ours is continually added to the roll news of more exacting conditions, and oppressions, such as denying to men, who, after years of experience have become proficient in their business, the privilege of working by the establishment of the age limit, physical examination, and personal record system. And now we learn that the Employers' Association of the United States proposes, through legislation, to take from the American industrial slave the right to demand

of his employer fair treatment and fair compensation. Labor, in the capitalistic book of judgment, is not entitled to the benefit of law. How long before the right of franchise will be deemed too luxurious for the wage earner, and the meshes of the net of industrial slavery which are gradually, surely entangling him, shall render his condition more deplorable than that of the negro prior to the sixties?

It does not seem a far step to disenfranchisement when we consider the ease with which capitalism paralyzes the legislative and judicial arms of our state and national government. State legislators may be bought for any sum ranging from ten dollars to one thousand a head, as exposed by Folk of Missouri, and government by injunction and restraining order, issued on the smallest pretext by judges catering to the whims of capital, has become more popular, at least more practiced, than government by the constitution.

So far as that great army of workers comprising those who maintain and operate the railway lines of the United States, are con-

cerned, they can remedy these conditions and stop this dangerous trend of events by casting aside class prejudice and working harmoniously together. Let this action be taken, and instead of tearing themselves to pieces in this arena of the United States, as did the gladiators of ancient Rome for the pleasure of their masters, follow the footsteps of their exploiters, the capitalists, who, to protect their own interests, have formulated plans to abolish rate cutting and other competitive evils among themselves. Through united action they have succeeded in gaining control of all branches of the government, including the United States army and state militia, which are ordered about at every whim of the hairy-handed leeches to assist in the subjugation of labor.

A close observer of unionism on railways can readily see that the railway magnates are successful in bringing about disturbance between the classes in an underhanded manner, so as to accomplish their own ends, they having studied the situation in a thorough man-

ner. While they are granting concessions in some cases, and vowing that they have the best interests of their employers at heart, they are at the same time stabbing them to the very core by the establishment of these false standards of protection, and so-called philanthropic schemes.

On April 1, 1901, I resigned from the service of the Southern Pacific, after having been in continuous employment since August 5, 1895, having had five positions and having passed successfully five medical examinations. I did not perform any railway duties until August, 1901, when I applied for a position on the Santa Fé, at Argentine, Kansas. I was given a personal record blank, which was an example of a black-list of the worst and most degrading type.

After filling out my personal record I went to a physician to undergo the standard medical examination, which made the sixth of that kind I had passed through in that many years. In this I was successful, and found myself once more plying my chosen vocation as

switchman. During my three years of service in the neighborhood of Kansas City, I have seen hundreds of men of practical experience hired and discharged under this system. During the busy season, or when the roads are congested with freight cars, men are hired and given employment irrespective of age or physical defects. When business commences to fall off they are called up for the medical examination, or requested to make out a personal record, in a few days then they receive their dismissal from the service of the company, and preference is given to the younger man because he is not so great a risk to the insurance, hospital, relief and pension departments of the corporation, while the chances of disasters his inexperience may cause to the traveling public go for naught.

Think of the awful disasters that are occurring and recurring from the want of more practical knowledge and cool headedness among student employees. Bring to mind the recent disaster to the Southern Pacific "owl" at Bryon, California, the Royal Blue in New

York, and the California limited trains, three and four, on the San Joaquin Valley, where a negro porter deliberately threw the switch in front of the train that had the right of track and was speeding along at a high rate, heading both trains together. What would have been the result if an old-time experienced brakeman had been there? If the train that took the siding backed in, the experienced brakeman would have closed the switch, adjusted the lock, and not only looked at the target to make sure of his movements, but he would also have glanced at the point of the switch to see that it fitted up close to the rail, as a piece of iron or dirt is liable at any time to fall in between the split point and the main rail, which would compress the spring, allow the lever to adjust itself in position, showing a clear target to an approaching train, at the same time leaving a death trap from which there would be no escape. After making these observations the experienced man would step to the opposite side of the track and remain there until the train passed.

The great deception to the public is that the facts of what is accomplished by years of experience in the saving of life and property never reach it, but the accidents that occur are duly chronicled by the press.

A flagman on a passenger train should be an old man who has had experience in the handling of heavy freight trains, and of ripened judgment in figuring on the weight of a train, the grade and the conditions of the rails on which the engineer flagged will be forced to stop. Under the old standard, when men had more experience than the younger element that is entering the service, a flagman had an iron rule laid down as to the method for protecting trains on the level and on mountain grades.

On the level the flagman proceeded to a point about one-half a mile, or fifteen telegraph poles, from the rear of his train. He then placed one torpedo on the rail, and continued to go back until he was not less than three-quarters of a mile, or twenty-three telegraph poles, from the rear end of his train.

There he placed two torpedoes on the rail, one rail length apart, and then returned to where he had placed the one first and awaited the signal to be called in. When called in he picked up the one torpedo, leaving the two farthest away, as they served as a warning to an approaching engineer to be on a close look-out for further signals ahead, as well as acting as a slow signal. After covering the distance required between the slow signal and where the danger signal and flagman ought to be, the engineer was at liberty to proceed as before. This method of flagging on the level was repeated three times on heavy mountain grade. When the flagman was called in he picked up his three single torpedoes, leaving out the three doubles. This gave an engineer ample warning and time to make a good stop without any excitement and emergency applications, such as are every day experiences since the inauguration of the student system and the barring of the practical man through the age limit and physical examination.

The student brakeman is granted more

privilege by the railway companies than the old-time man either expected or enjoyed. The old standard of flagging has been abolished, and under the new rules the student is allowed to use his judgment concerning the proper distance to proceed back to flag. He therefore has in mind but one thing—namely, the distance he will have to run to his train when called in. Consequently he does not go far. The writer has seen a student brakeman “protecting” the rear end of a passenger train which had been stopped in an obscure place for more than twenty minutes, two telegraph poles from the end of the last coach, with a curve ahead of him shutting out his view beyond 300 feet.

The student knows nothing of speed, or weight, or condition of the rails, and he doesn't want to lose sight of his train for fear of being left, or forced to run for it, thus taking the crease out of his trousers and the stiffness from his collar. He exercises his judgment, which is not as heavy as a peanut, and wrecks follow. The management is prolific

with explanations. The fault is either shunted off on to either the shoulders of the conductor, or perhaps the engineer of the approaching train. A hint at the truth might cause the public to inquire into the reason for placing incompetent and inexperienced men in places where human life is the heavy penalty of shortsightedness and fault.

And these conditions will not be changed until the superintendent, and not the half-baked medical examiner, with the paint of the doctor factory still fresh on him, is given free reign in the hiring of men in the traffic department of the railroads of our country.

The following is a correct account of what doubtless would have been one of the worst disasters in modern railroad history, on the Santa Fé between Argentine and Kansas City, if it had not been for the foresight gained by practical experience. It was shortly after the flood of 1903 that a special was ordered to leave the union depot, Kansas City, one night at 11 o'clock. These trains are made up in Argentine and backed into the Kansas City

union depot by a pilot. In the absence of a regular pilot a switchman is substituted in his place. The train is equipped with what is called a tail, or back-up hose, which is attached to the train line hose at the rear end, and which is provided with an air whistle for signal purposes, as well as a valve which answers the same purpose as the engineers' air valve in cab of the engine. After night, pilots use, in addition, a headlight on the rear platform of the rear coach.

It fell to my lot to take this special back-up to the union depot. At this time the yards for a distance of five miles were congested with freight, and the Hall block signals were also out of order, making extra precaution necessary.

I arrived at the union depot to find that I could not get back to Argentine except by riding on the train that I had brought in, as the back-up of No. 116, on which I had counted, had just left. I was about to climb on the smoker of the special when I heard the conductor instruct the engineer not to stop at

Argentine. I immediately went forward to the engine to ask the engineer to slow down for me when he arrived there. To this he replied that he would. On arriving at the south end yards we saw 116's back-up ahead of us. They got away from us at the Frisco crossing, as the special was held there about five minutes waiting for a Frisco drag to cross over. On arriving at the Belt Line block we were again stopped and, as there were cars on the third rail which obstructed the view of the main line, I told the engineer, who had twice called for the signal, that I would walk over to the tower and try and ascertain the cause of the delay. I informed the tower man that he was holding a special passenger train. He said that no one had notified him of any such train, and that he had just let a freight drag out of the Chicago line, and that he would let us go as soon as possible. Before I reached the engine he gave us the board.

When we were nearing the Twelfth street bridge that spans the Kaw river and connects Kansas City, Kansas, with Argentine, I com-

menced to feel a little uneasy as with cars scattered along the third rail it was impossible, after reaching this point to see farther than a few car lengths ahead. The engineer saw the electric headlight of train 116's engine coming out of the coach yard, where she side-tracked her train. He passed the remark to me that "She is in to clear. I guess I'll let her out a little and let you off at the depot." He was then running about 28 miles per hour. I said that it was impossible for the drag that was ahead of us from Chicago Junction to be into clear, and that he had better look out and be a little careful. He immediately shut off and made a slight application of air, and when we shot around the sharpest point of the curve where the view was obstructed with cars, we found ourselves stopping within a hundred feet or so of a train occupying the main line, the crew of which had no information whatever of a special.

If it had not been for the fact that I overheard the conductor give the engineer instructions not to stop at Argentine, there

would in all probability have occurred another wreck, the responsibility for which would have been charged to carelessness on the part of the dead men, while the officials who permitted such a train to leave the union depot without notifying all concerned, would never have been censured.

This is not an exceptional case. There are similar occurrences every day. Yet the officials at fault in this case, and others of like nature, would discharge one of their men for following a custom that had been in vogue for years, but which was not according to the book of rules, if he should cause thereby two dollars' damage, and yet allow the man who succeeded him to do the same kind of work and discharge him for insubordination if he refused. The following is an illustration:

It was only a short time ago that a switchman and engineer in Argentine were discharged for going against traffic on the main line inside of yards proper, causing a collision of two switch engines, and actual damage of two dollars and eighty cents. It had been

the custom for years for this piece of track to be used both ways by yard engines, with the understanding that they keep out of the way of first-class trains, freight trains not using this part of the main line except under special instructions from the yardmaster. The punishment in this case was severe.

A short time after this incident I was called upon to take thirty cars of stock to the Kansas City stock yards with only one man to assist me. I entered a protest to an official, stating that I did not care to go as I did not consider it safe. His reply was that I could either go or be discharged for insubordination. Here I was placed in a position where I was forced to shove thirty cars ahead of an engine into the stock yards, over one railroad crossing, against traffic, and over two dangerous street crossings, at the dictation of an official who could have discharged me for refusing to go, while if anything had occurred I should have been discharged by the superintendent of terminals for moving without properly flagging. If I had left the head end of the cars to flag, I

would have been forced to pass the dwarf signals that govern the Belt Line, then by the time the cars were in motion the signal might have been taken away, and the result would have been another wreck, and a switchman discharged for carelessness.

While all officials are not alike, there are some who swell all out of proportion for the position they hold and are very apt to be arbitrary in their rulings. At one time while tending switches at the east end of a certain yard, I called an official's attention to the fact that a switch which had just been O. K'd by the section men was not safe to use. He informed me that they knew their business, and that I should use it. Irrespective of his commands I flagged the fast mail and told the engineer to go over it slowly. The next train was a fast freight. I slowed him up, climbed on the engine and told the engineer to be careful when heading in, as the switch point did not look good to me. After his engine and the greater part of his train had passed over the switch, he commenced to speed them up

a little, with the result that four or five cars left the rail and tore down four switch stands, and would have turned over if I had not jumped in between and broke the air hose.

When the official to whom I had reported the switch arrived upon the scene he asked me how it occurred. I gave him all the information in detail, informing him of how I stopped the train. He said that he would see that I was commended for it. I knew this was all wind, as it would have led to an investigation, the fact that I had reported the switch to him as unsafe, and that he had insisted on its use, would have been disclosed, and have led to his dismissal.

Five or six months later, when working in the same position and heading in a train, I saw fire flying toward the rear of the train, and I thought at the time that it was caused by a guide pin on brake beam striking a wheel. When the car came near to me I saw that it was off the track. I waited till two or three cars passed me, so as to lessen the danger of being squeezed in case of the derailed car turn-

ing over before I succeeded in stopping the train. I was afraid that the engineer would not see my signals, and that he would run on until the derailed car struck the scales, or knocked down the iron wagon viaduct which spanned the yards a short distance ahead. I parted the hose, thus setting the air on the rear end of the train, and left it so, while I walked back to the caboose to inform the conductor as to the condition of his train. He asked me why I left the hose uncoupled. I replied that if I coupled it up again and the engineer saw that his air was pumping all right, he might mistake it as a signal given along the work lead and start to pull ahead, not knowing he had a car off the track.

I mention these incidents, not for the purpose of self-praise, as they are common occurrences with men in every branch of train service, but to show what a man of practical experience can and will do. And yet I am now barred from railroad work, when I lose my present position, because I am more than thirty-five years of age.

CHAPTER XXI.

WORKING IN THE FLOOD.

On the night of May 31, 1903, the greatest flood ever experienced since white men have lived there, swept down the valley of the Kaw, or Kansas river. The usual number of engines were at work that night in the Santa Fé yards at Argentine—namely, the farm, house yard, rip track, hole, slide and coach yard. Inch by inch the water rose over what had been the high water mark of previous years, and one by one the engines were put out of service, until all were silent, with the exception of one working at the east end of the yard.

This crew, of which I was one, now isolated from all others, continued on through the night without rubber boots or waterproof clothing, wading in water knee deep, switching

out high-ball freight, and moving it to higher ground. This was accompanied by considerable danger, as there were headblocks, switch ties, and all kinds of lumber imaginable floating in the rapidly filling yards.

About the last move we made was to take all the cabooses to the highest available point. This was done without instructions from anyone, and we continued to work until it was no longer possible to turn a wheel. By that time there was water to the east, west, and north and, as the railroad runs east and west through Argentine, our only available exit from the path of the flood was by means of the hills to the south. When the water was at its height, there was only half a mile of track above water between Argentine and Kansas City, a distance of five miles.

The inhabitants of Argentine had been resting in the fancied security that every hour the river, which was then higher than it had been in many years, had reached its crest, and would soon begin receding. This proved to be a delusion that caused them to be caught

like rats in a trap. They awoke from their sleep to hear the hungry current tearing at the foundations of their houses, and leaped from their beds into the muddy tide that streamed across their floors. Then commenced an uproar that I hope shall never be my lot to witness again. Cries from those in distress, shrieks of agony from those in immediate peril, pistol and gunshots from all parts of the inundated district, sounded incessantly, carrying their wireless messages for aid to those who were doing all within their power to render assistance. Those who worked at the rescue were spurred to exert all their energies by the roar of the whirling, muddy waters of the rapidly rising Kansas river, which a few miles east of Argentine empties into the Missouri, and which, from a peaceful, sluggish stream had grown into a terrible torrent. Realizing the danger confronting the people in the lower part of the town, I, with hundreds of others, offered my assistance where it was possible to accomplish the greatest good.

I first visited a friend to induce him to remove his family to my home, which was on higher ground. After conversing on existing conditions a few minutes we concluded that the water, instead of rising higher, would spread. On leaving his home, what was my surprise to find the cross walk, which was perfectly dry a few minutes before, now had a stream of water running over it. We at once decided that our guess was wrong. After removing the family to a place of safety, we proceeded to the east end of the railroad yards and constructed a raft by spiking grain doors from cars together across three bridge timbers which we found floating near by. Our raft completed, we divested ourselves of all unnecessary clothing and started out to rescue as many as possible.

We succeeded in getting to a point within half a mile of where we would have been of great assistance, when we were caught in a current that crossed the yards and forced back to our starting-point. In deep water and a strong current, our raft became unmanage-

able. After various bumps, upsettings and baths in the muddy waters, caused by our raft striking submerged switch stands, we saw that it was useless to try to stem the current from that point and, abandoning our enterprise, we proceeded to a part of the town where hundreds of willing hands were rendering assistance to those who had been brought in on rafts and boats, hastily constructed for that purpose.

Right willingly did everyone perform whatever duty was assigned to him, all classes, irrespective of position, doing all within their power to alleviate the sufferings of those in distress. My friend and I finally found an abandoned raft and succeeded in reaching his house. We found the water, which a few hours before had not reached the sidewalks, flowing into the window of his dwelling, making it impossible to remove anything.

After as many people as it was possible to reach had been removed to safety by those who worked with boats and rafts, and provided with shelter, the next contingency to meet

was that of food supply. Argentine was, by that time, cut off from all outside communication by rail. The city officials confiscated several cars of meat that were standing in the yards, and which were only accessible by boats. Holes were cut in the roofs of the cars and the meat was taken out with hooks. It was then conveyed to the city hall and distributed to those in need.

The scenes of the next twenty-four hours will long be remembered by the people of that vicinity. Armourdale, which is a part of Kansas City, Kansas, is situated on the north bank of the Kansas river, opposite Argentine. The river cut off Armourdale by spreading between the city and the hills, and gradually closed in, hemming the town in on all sides. Argentine, in this respect, was more fortunate than Armourdale, as it is built near the hills.

The river between the two cities was spanned by numerous substantial iron and steel bridges. With the rising of the water to the roadways of the bridges, drift piled up against them in compact masses. It soon be-

came plain that this means of retreat from Armourdale must ultimately succumb to the constantly increasing pressure of the water. The first to go was the county bridge, which was only natural, as it was farthest up stream. Almost simultaneously with its collapse followed the crash of the Kansas City Suburban Belt Line, Twelfth Street electric line, and other bridges down the river.

At the approach to the Twelfth street bridge in Armourdale, were two men and a woman, who, to all appearances, were afraid to attempt the passage of the structure, trembling as it was under the pressure of driftwood and water. They had been there several hours. Finally this bridge, which, while standing, was to them a forlorn hope, was by the hand of nature wrung from its foundations of iron and stone as if it were a silken thread, and swept out of sight, leaving them isolated on an island only a few feet in circumference. They were at length rescued by a boat, which moved them to higher ground.

A mother with her infant in her arms, was

seen clinging to the boughs of a partly-submerged tree. While preparations were being made for rescuing her she succumbed to exhaustion, released her grasp, and was swept away. Her despairing cry sounded across the turbid waters, echoing like a chilling memory, after the current closed its greedy clutch above her head. An old man, taken from the swaying branches of a tree that was being swiftly uprooted by the current, where he had spent several hours before his cries of distress were heard, roundly abused his rescuer for not coming to his assistance sooner.

Tale after tale of rescue, undreamed-of heroism and appalling destruction might be chronicled. The bridges destroyed, the water at its highest, the work of rescue over, a change presented itself in the panoramic scene, which many a sufferer beheld with agony, as he, or she saw the savings of a lifetime passing onward down the river with the flood. Houses broke away from their foundations, some of one, two and three stories, and were carried to destruction, some floating in

bunches, as if loath to part with the companions of years; next a procession in single file, then barns and sheds of all descriptions, some with chickens on the roofs crowing and cackling as if enjoying their ride to a watery grave; other buildings with dogs, hogs and everything imaginable swept by until, apparently satisfied with its work, the river cleared of all the handiwork of man and assumed the appearance of a placid lake, stretching from the bluffs of Argentine on the south to the highlands of Kansas City, Kansas, on the north varying in width from three to five miles.

The scene of wreckage after the waters subsided was indescribable. Houses that were not carried away were piled indiscriminately in the streets, box cars and oil tanks were lifted from their trucks and, in the Santa Fé yards at Kansas City, the entire yards were washed out, and in one spot a hole was burrowed by the current, at the bottom of which lay two Pullman and one tourist sleeping cars, and four locomotives, with plenty of room for many more. It was weeks before the yards

were cleared of wreckage and the tracks restored so as to admit of the usual volume of traffic.

IN CONCLUSION.

This ends my personal record, and I trust that it will carry weight enough to at least cause a ripple on the deep of complacent capitalism. Indeed, my hope is that the plain facts herein given regarding the abuses practiced, in defiance of law and the interests of humanity, may be the means of oppressed labor arousing to a complete understanding of its strength and the bursting of the degrading fetters.

It must not be presumed that officials are exempt from the cares and trials that result from competition, any more than those who labor are. All over the country, from president down to the lowliest worker, railroad employees and officials are in competition one against the other. The bugbear of DIVIDENDS stares every executive officer in the face, and the evil thereof ramifies down to the

bottom. Presidents are forced to reduce operating expenses, and, to this end, instead of having two or three general managers on one system, it is all placed under the care of one man. The general manager, following along the trail marked for him, doubles and trebles the divisions of superintendents. Dispatchers and roadmasters, and all petty officers, have their responsibilities increased, and the amount of their daily tasks stretched, in the fevered endeavor to make records as financiers for somebody higher up.

The result of this competition is cheapness and incompetency, and the penalty is paid by the traveling public.

THE END.

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